



This material has been provided by Asbury Theological Seminary in good faith of following ethical procedures in its production and end use.

The Copyright law of the united States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyright material. Under certain condition specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to finish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.”* If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

Contact

B.L. Fisher Library
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 N. Lexington Ave.
Wilmore, KY 40390

B.L. Fisher Library’s Digital Content
place.asburyseminary.edu



Asbury Theological Seminary
205 North Lexington Avenue
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

800.2ASBURY
asburyseminary.edu

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVIDENCES OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

A Study in Biblical Theology


by

Elmer E. Parsons

A Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF THEOLOGY

Major Subject: Theology

Approved:


In charge of Major Work


Second Reader

Asbury Theological Seminary
1955

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVIDENCES OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

A Study in Biblical Theology

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty

Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Theology

by

Elmer E. Parsons

May 1955

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| The problem | 2 |
| Method and presuppositions | 5 |
| Limitations | 8 |
| II. THE FIRST GENERATION CHRISTIANS BELIEVED | |
| THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD | 10 |
| The New Testament as a reliable source . . | 11 |
| The claim of the New Testament | 11 |
| The proven antiquity of the documents . | 12 |
| Other evidence of genuineness | 14 |
| Examination of the New Testament evidence. | 15 |
| Direct testimony | 15 |
| Indirect testimony | 18 |
| The preaching emphasis | 20 |
| The Resurrection in the epistles | 22 |
| The dependent issues | 26 |
| The testimony of the students of history . | 28 |
| General statements | 28 |
| The testimony of critics | 30 |
| Secular historians | 31 |
| Summary of chapter two | 31 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| III. THE SEARCH FOR AN ADEQUATE CAUSE FOR THE | |
| NEW TESTAMENT BELIEF | 33 |
| Criteria for evaluating an "adequate cause". | 33 |
| Sufficient strength | 33 |
| Sufficient presentability | 35 |
| Consistent moral quality | 37 |
| Brief summary of the cause as given in the | |
| New Testament | 39 |
| Alternate suggested causes with evaluations. | 43 |
| The theory of fraud | 43 |
| Evaluation of fraud theory | 45 |
| Modern fraud theories | 46 |
| Resuscitation or swoon theory | 49 |
| Evaluation of swoon theory | 51 |
| Subjective vision or hallucination theory. | 52 |
| Evaluation | 55 |
| Objective vision theory | 57 |
| Evaluations of objective vision theories . | 61 |
| Evasion of the problem | 63 |
| Evaluation of evasion | 70 |
| Conclusion: an adequate correlation of cause | |
| and effect | 71 |
| The relation of the Biblical cause to the | |
| known effect | 71 |
| Real reasons for rejecting | 73 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| IV. THE PROBLEM PRESENTED BY A STUDY OF THE RE- | |
| CORDED EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO JESUS' DEATH, | |
| REPORT OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND HIS APPEAR- | |
| ANCES | 75 |
| The nature of the problem | 75 |
| Criteria for evaluating the genuineness of | |
| the Resurrection witness | 79 |
| Measured by the standard of religious ex- | |
| perience | 79 |
| Measured by the laws of establishing | |
| evidence | 80 |
| Measured by the laws of fact and fiction . . | 83 |
| The facts investigated | 84 |
| The post-crucifixion condition | 84 |
| Seven "photographic" stories | 91 |
| The first believer | 92 |
| The first witness | 94 |
| The reports of the women | 96 |
| The two enroute to Emmaus | 100 |
| The Sunday evening appearance | 105 |
| The convincing of Thomas | 106 |
| The restoration of Peter | 108 |
| Summary of the emotional reaction upon | |
| hearing of Jesus' Resurrection | 114 |

CHAPTER

PAGE

| | |
|---|-----|
| Summary of the emotional reactions in the presence of Jesus or of the announcing angels | 117 |
| The emphasis upon the scripture in re- lation to the Resurrection | 123 |
| The problem restated, evaluation and summary | 126 |
| Do the recorded experiences have the marks of valid religious experience . | 126 |
| Can the testimony of these experiences be trusted? | 128 |
| V. THE PROBLEM PRESENTED BY THE NATURE OF THE | |
| RECORD OF THE RESURRECTION | 132 |
| The method and limitations of this approach. | 132 |
| Observation of general problems in the | |
| Resurrection data | 134 |
| Its fragmentary nature | 134 |
| Questions left unanswered | 135 |
| Alleged contradictions | 136 |
| Its non-defensive attitude | 139 |
| Summary | 140 |
| The writers' purposes and self-limitations . | 141 |
| First Corinthians fifteen | 141 |
| The Gospel according to Matthew | 148 |
| Mark sixteen, verses one to eight | 150 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| The Gospel according to Luke with Acts one, verses one to twelve | 151 |
| The Gospel according to John | 157 |
| Summary and Conclusion | 160 |
| Consideration of the objections to the Resurrection accounts in the light of this investigation | 160 |
| The striking absence of apologetic to unbelievers | 163 |
| The more emphatic testimony | 164 |
| VI. CONCLUSION | 166 |
| The facing of presuppositions | 166 |
| The presupposition of naturalism | 166 |
| The creation of false dilemmas rising out of presuppositions | 167 |
| Fallacious concepts regarding the New Testament writers | 168 |
| Summary of present findings | 170 |
| The first generation Christians believed Jesus rose from the dead | 170 |
| The New Testament explanation alone ade- quately explains the origin of this belief | 171 |
| The experience reported by the Resurrection witnesses has all the marks of reality . | 172 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| The reports themselves have the marks of fact as contrasted to fiction | 173 |
| The New Testament writers all testify to a more adequate witness | 174 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 177 |

CHAPTER I

I. INTRODUCTION

"And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. . . . If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable."¹ Thus wrote the Apostle Paul, dramatically resting the verification of the Christian faith on the Resurrection of Jesus. Paul wrote in the sixth decade of the first century A.D., yet it is indeed interesting to note that in the same decade of the twentieth century we find the same issue very much alive. Printing presses from around the world are sending forth books discussing from various vantage points the significance of Jesus' Resurrection.

A young Ceylonese believer considers man's immortality.

We who are on earth are bounded by death, we are on this side of it: those who are dead are also bounded by death, they are on that side of it; but Jesus is risen and ascended, he is both on this side and on that. He has conquered death.²

Emil Brunner, prominent Swiss theologian serving as missionary-professor in Japan, views the relationship of the Resur-

¹ I Corinthians 15:14, 19, American Standard Version. This version is used for all subsequent Biblical references unless otherwise stated.

² D. T. Niles, Preaching the Gospel of the Resurrection (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 33. Cf. Romans 14:9.

rection to the origin of Christianity. Had not Jesus shown Himself as the Risen One, "faith in Christ would have collapsed, no ecclesia would have arisen, the knowledge of Jesus would not have reached us." Instead, the event of Jesus' life "would have merged as an unimportant episode of Jewish Sectarian history into the darkness of world history."³ On the other side of the globe, an English scholar observes the intimate relationship between the Resurrection and the Christian Church. "The truth of Christianity," he declares, "is inseparable from the truth of the apostolic assertion that Jesus the crucified rose again from the dead. This assertion therefore calls for serious examination."⁴

II. THE PROBLEM

The above convictions relative to the centrality of the Resurrection are shared by the present writer. Thus if any new facts can be discovered, any new truths that lie buried in the thought of the past brought to light, or a better arrangement of these facts be made, this study will be justified.

This thesis acknowledges that it partakes of the nature of a limited apologetic. The Resurrection has been under nearly constant attack for two millennia, yet still

³ Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope, Harold Knight, Translator (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), p. 143.

⁴ F. F. Bruce, The Dawn of Christianity (London: The Paternoster Press, 1950), p. 65.

inspires the faith of many intelligent and thoughtful men. However, its very nature, claiming to be a unique, supernatural, and cosmic event has made many to be prejudiced against it.⁵ Largely motivated by attitudes of skepticism, men within the Christian Church have undermined the belief in Jesus' Resurrection by various devices. Some have used the "exit" provided by pragmatic philosophy, ignoring the Resurrection fact, but trying for practical purposes to hold on to the Resurrection faith. Others have attacked the Resurrection accounts as presented in the New Testament, rearranging, deleting, and interpreting the material to conform to their presuppositions.⁶

Yet even the skeptic must sometime give a moment's consideration to the fact that perchance these things are true. The unusual history of the Jewish race, the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament which built up a Messianic expectation so wonderfully fulfilled in Jesus,⁷ the beauty and power of Jesus' life and ministry, the declaration of His Resurrection, the fact of the Christian Church, the undeniable moral change effected in the lives of countless believers as a result of faith in and obedience to the Risen Lord, should all give one a clue that the assertion of the Christian Church that "God has spoken" can well be true.

⁵ Cf. James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp. 14-15.

⁶Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁷Cf. John 7:31.

C. S. Lewis testifies that while he was an atheist he had to try to persuade himself that the whole human race "were pretty good fools until about a hundred years ago; . . . " but that after he became a Christian he "was able to take a more liberal view."⁸

The present study proposes to offer the disbeliever some grounds for "doubting his unbelief" by pointing to certain psychological phenomena connected with the Resurrection faith and the Resurrection accounts which strongly point to their reality. We can discern certain psychological "effects," the "causes" of which are indeed difficult to discover if one refuses to accept the Christian explanation. We observe first the phenomena of the historically proven fact that the immediate disciples and early Christians believed that Jesus rose from the dead. Is this belief genuine, and if so what inspired it? Chapters two and three will deal with this problem. The next question centers around the nature of the religious experience of the Resurrection witnesses and especially an analysis of the emotional phenomena found in the gospel accounts. We will attempt to answer the question as to the reality of their experiences and the adequacy both in power and nature of the stated psychological causes to account for the reported effects.

⁸ C. S. Lewis, The Case for Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 31.

The final investigation deals with those who wrote the records of these experiences, the authors of the gospels, the Book of Acts, and I Corinthians fifteen especially. Why did they select what they did? Do they share in any basic assumptions that we are likely to overlook? It is not denied that other reasons have been proposed as to why these men believed as they did, reacted as they did, wrote as they did. The burden of proof, however, lies with those who offer some other explanation of these causes than what is given in the New Testament. We will consider Biblical and other explanations given and evaluate them objectively.

This study does not propose to cover the entire field of apologetics as relates to the Resurrection. Many have written efficiently in reply to the various attacks. It is not intended to hence re-cover the areas they have treated, although material will be drawn from them when it is especially pertinent to the present approach. It is the conviction of the writer that the body of evidence considered in this thesis has never been systematically presented as a unit and therefore the occasion of this study.

III. METHOD AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

The proposed method is two-fold: a fresh investigation of the original sources and a consideration and evaluation of the writings and research of others. The New Testament will be considered the primary source. In chapters two and three the strength and nature of the New

Testament Resurrection faith will be evaluated as a psychological phenomenon with its alleged cause, along with other proposed causes, likewise evaluated. Definite criteria will be established at the beginning of chapter three by which evaluation will be made. Chapter four will likewise attempt to evaluate the religious experience of the Resurrection witness on the basis of set criteria presented in the chapter. The predispositions of the authors of the Resurrection accounts will likewise be considered in chapter five, with parallels drawn between them and modern writers.

The Biblical sources will include the entire New Testament, but especially Matthew 28, John 20 and 21, I Corinthians 15:1-11, Mark 16:1-8, Mark 16:9-20 and Luke 24 combined with Acts 1:1-14. The Mark account is considered as two separate sources because of the uncertain relation of the concluding portion to the rest of the book as evidenced by its omission in some of our most ancient manuscripts. Mark 16:8-20 will be looked upon as authentic source material, however. Luke 24 and Acts 1:1-14 will be considered jointly under the assumption that they have a common author. It is not the purpose of this paper to try to prove the above but assume it on the basis of such authority as H. J. Cadbury who commenting on the relationship said,

Their unity is a fundamental and illuminating axiom. Among all the problems of New Testament authorship no answer is so universally agreed upon as is the

common authorship of these two volumes.⁹

Throughout the thesis all Biblical quotations will be from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

The following presuppositions and rules of procedure will influence the present paper:

The present text of the Bible will be considered reliable and essentially that of the original. Thus we will not consider anything an interpolation or addition for which there is not good documentary evidence.

The authors of the Resurrection accounts will be given an opportunity to speak for themselves. Where they have indicated selectivity or purpose in writing, we will attempt to take them seriously.¹⁰ What they ascribe as a cause, we will ascribe as a cause. What they declare to be an effect, we will consider an effect.¹¹

We will try to give the greatest weight to the obvious and specific rather than to the incidental and exceptional. Thus a rule of interpretation will be that in the place of apparent conflict obscure meanings must conform to the interpretation of the plain rather than vice versa.

Finally, I write as a Christian--a believer. I feel

⁹ H. J. Cadbury, The Making of Luke-Acts (1927), p.8. Quoted in R. G. S. Hopwood, The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 22.

¹⁰ Cf. post p.133. Also pp. 141 ff.

¹¹ Cf. post p.66. Here the importance of this is well illustrated.

this does not invalidate the method used or the conclusions arrived at. First, this is because I have not always been a believer. Second, I do not present these facts because I am a believer; but, to some degree at least, I am a believer because of the force of these facts.

V. LIMITATIONS

This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive study and proof of the entire subject of Jesus' Resurrection but approaches it from only one of many possible avenues. No effort is made here to give a chronology of the Resurrection events. Where this is alluded to in the text of the thesis, the student will be referred to what the writer considers the best authority on the subject. The same can be said of the Old Testament predictions of Jesus' Resurrection, along with Jesus' own pre-crucifixion intimations that He would rise again. No effort is made to exhaustively investigate the nature of the Resurrection body, to summarize Jesus' post-Resurrection teachings and commands, or to give a systematic evaluation of the issues of the Resurrection. The above is not to indicate that none of these fields will be referred to, but the stream of thought will flow within the channel defined by the questions discussed in the presentation of the problem with which we plan to deal.

It seems only proper in this introductory section to acknowledge the source of the original inspiration which instigated this study. The debt is largely owed to one who

has gone to his reward, Dr. Wilbert W. White, founder of the Biblical Seminary in New York. His little book, The Resurrection Body "According to the Scriptures," suggests many of the problems around which this study centers.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST GENERATION CHRISTIANS BELIEVED THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

Did the first century Christians, those living during and immediately after the life and death of Jesus, let us say from thirty to seventy A.D., believe that Jesus rose from the dead? The modern historian may investigate this problem by using his customary tools and methods.¹ Nor is the historian limited to one particular line of approach. The Christian Church as a contemporary institution challenges him to account for its origin. That it originated in the first century A.D. and spread rapidly is verified by first century historians.² Institutions within the church which relate to the death and Resurrection of Jesus claim apostolic origin and have secular witnesses to their antiquity. Among these are the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism along with the institution of worship on the first day of the week. The ascription of Divinity to Jesus and worship of Him were widely practiced by the

¹ Cf. Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York: Harper and Bros., 1937), Vol. I, p. 59.

² Cf. Tacitus, Annals, Book xv, No. 44. in Modern Library, The Complete Works of Tacitus, Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, Translators (New York: The Random House, 1942), p. 380.

"Christians" according to the correspondence of the Roman governor of the province of Bithynia around 110-113 A.D.³ This act of worship as well as the change of the worship day from the seventh to the first day of the week by men with strong Jewish training represents no small phenomena. Both claim to have a relation to the Resurrection of Jesus. Let them be investigated. Sources are available for study. However, our chief source for evidence that the first generation Christians believed Jesus rose from the dead is the New Testament.

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A RELIABLE SOURCE

The Claim of the New Testament. The New Testament purports to be a collection of ancient writings centering around incidents of the first part of the first century A.D. They are concerned with the life of Jesus and the beginnings of the Christian Church. They profess to be written by different people and from different standpoints. Some are biography, some history, some personal letters, some open letters, and at least one an autobiographical report of a vision. Had their contention of being authentic first century documents never been challenged, this preface to the succeeding discussion would not be necessary. While it is

³ Pliny the Younger, Correspondence with the Emperor Trajan, Letters No. 97 and 98, in The Harvard Classics, Charles W. Eliot, editor, Vol. IX, Letters of Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, William Melmoth, Translator (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Company, 1909), pp. 404-405.

true that this challenge has been far from universal and limited largely to the last century, some consideration must be given to the claim of the New Testament documents. It should also be said here that it is not the import of this thesis to discuss this item in detail nor to defend more than the fact that the major body of the New Testament documents are authentic. While some exceptions may be challenged, the main body of these books rise and fall together.

The Proven Antiquity of the Documents. Before considering the charge that the New Testament was manufactured by others than the alleged authors, a few comments are in order to verify that these are ancient documents. "No other work from Graeco-Roman antiquity is so well attested by manuscript tradition as the New Testament."⁴ We have over three thousand manuscripts of the New Testament, or parts of it, in the original Greek plus enough in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Gothic, and others to bring the total now in existence to over twelve thousand.⁵ Others are being found. Compared to other works of antiquity, this is phenomenal. Tacitus, the Latin historian upon whom we rely for much of our history of the Roman Emperors of the first century has only one surviving manuscript of a considerable

⁴ William Foxwell Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine (London: Penguin Books, 1949), p. 238.

⁵ Fredric G. Kenyon, Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1901), p. 4.

part of his annals, and that from the twelfth century.⁶ He is mentioned by one contemporary, Pliny the Younger,⁷ and from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries was mentioned only two or three times in extant literature.⁸ While others fared some better, to have a hundred manuscripts of an ancient work is considered good.⁹

Not only in terms of numbers, but in comparative closeness to the original source, the New Testament is unique. We have complete manuscripts from the fourth century, plus fragments from the second and third centuries.¹⁰ These complete manuscripts are hence only 250 to 300 years from the original writings. Of the Greek classical writers, Plato is separated from his earliest manuscript by thirteen hundred years, Demosthenes twelve hundred. The Latin authors are some better, but still with a much greater gap than the New Testament writings. Virgil, the Latin Poet, is the "only" one who "approaches the New Testament in earliness of attestation. . . . Even so his text is not in so favorable a position as that of the New Testament by nearly 100 years."¹¹

⁶Tacitus, in Modern Library, op. cit., pp. xxii-xxiii.

⁷Ibid., p. ix.

⁸Ibid., p. xxii.

⁹Cf. Kenyon: op. cit. p. 3.

¹⁰Bernard Ramm, Protestant Christian Evidences (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 231.

¹¹Kenyon, op. cit., p. 5.

If any ancient literature has a right to be heard, it is the New Testament.

Other Evidence of Genuineness. The questioning of the date of authorship of the New Testament is on a different basis than documentary. It imagines second century authors putting the words and actions of the New Testament back in a first century setting. The whole nature of the New Testament argues against it. The references to contemporary political figures, places, and conditions are far too natural and incidental to allow a general fraud. Also, the letters, for example, fit too casually into the history to allow pre-meditation. The relationship is close enough and the central ideas so related, including issues centering around the Resurrection, that in general the New Testament books must stand or fall together.

Archaeological research of the last fifty years has done much to assure that they stand as authentic first century documents. Speaking of discoveries since 1931, Dr. W. F. Albright says:

These remarkable discoveries have dealt the coup de grace to such extreme critical views of the New Testament as the speculations of the Tübingen School, founded by F. G. Baur, and the Dutch School, headed by Van Manen.¹²

The Gospel of John has been under special attack, accused of showing bad topography and geography. Archaeology has proved the accuracy of many of the supposedly

¹²Albright, op. cit., p. 240.

most vulnerable places.¹³ This same gospel has been attacked as second century because it uses vocabulary which is said to be related to Gnosticism, which did not reach its height until that time. The recent Dead Sea Scrolls have shown that these concepts were in common use in Palestine before the time of Christ. Dr. Albright says of these:

The supposed cases of Gnostic influence on the Gospel of John actually do not belong in the true Gnostic horizon of the second century A.D. at all, but prove the close relations in time between the Essenes and Jesus.¹⁴

Other evidence is available, but let this suffice to show that in the New Testament we have an authentic source to investigate the evidence for belief in the Resurrection by first generation Christians.

II. EXAMINATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

Direct Testimony. At least three people in the New Testament give "first person" testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus. The first of these is Peter, acknowledged by all of the sources to be a leader both of the original disciples of Jesus and of the early church. In his general letter known as the First Epistle of Peter, after identifying himself and saluting the people to whom he is writing, he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again un-

¹³ Ibid., pp. 244-245.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 249.

to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. . . .¹⁵ More emphatic still, however, are the more informal statements from the lips of Peter as recorded in his sermons, testimonies, and defenses in the Book of Acts. We find him in the house of a devout Roman centurion named Cornelius, speaking to him, his kinsmen, and friends. Knowing of their at least partial knowledge of the life and activity of Jesus after reminding them of it, Peter says,

And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.¹⁶

Peter concludes his sermon at Pentecost with a declaration of the Resurrection of Jesus and says, "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are witnesses."¹⁷ In the presence of the very men who were responsible for the death of Jesus, we find Peter crying out,

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy

¹⁵ I Peter 1:3; cf. also I Peter 5:1.

¹⁶ Acts 10:39-43. In this and subsequent Bible quotations italics by the author are for emphasis and do not represent italics in the original.

¹⁷ Acts 2:32.

Spirit, whom God has given to them that obey him.¹⁸

The second direct witness is the writer of the Fourth Gospel, almost universally acknowledged to be another leading disciple and early church man--John. Three times in the Resurrection accounts of chapter 20 and 21, the writer refers to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (a designation used elsewhere in the gospel also) as being a participant in the Resurrection incidents.¹⁹ At the very end of the account he positively identifies himself, the writer, as this "one whom Jesus loved" by saying, "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true."²⁰

The third man who uses the first person to declare himself a witness is the Apostle Paul. In First Corinthians fifteen, after listing some of Jesus' appearances, he includes the appearance of Jesus to him, no doubt referring to the experience on the Damascus road. ". . . and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also."²¹ The significance of this testimony will be discussed at a later time.²²

¹⁸ Acts 5:30-32; cf. also Acts 1:21-22 and Acts 3:14-15.

¹⁹ That this was John is further evidenced that in listing the seven present in the Galilee appearance in chapter 21, he refers to the "Sons of Zebedee" as being there. John 21:2.

²⁰ John 21:24.

²¹ I Cor. 15:8.

²² Cf. post p. 146.

Indirect Testimony. While all other references to the Resurrection might well be called indirect, in this section we are thinking especially of those accounts written in the third person telling of people who saw Jesus or of those who described the first century Christians as believers in the Resurrection. Each of the gospel accounts concludes with stories of the Resurrection appearances and the witness to them. Likewise does Acts 1:1-11, which professes to be a continuation of the Gospel according to Luke. The content of these accounts will be investigated carefully in Chapter IV of this thesis. It is sufficient here to point them out as a large body of evidence that the New Testament Church believed Jesus rose from the dead. In the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians we have what many consider the first written account of Resurrection witnesses. There Paul gives a summary account of five appearances, exclusive of his own. Jesus appeared to Cephas, then the twelve, then to over five hundred brethren at once, followed by appearances to James and all the apostles. In speaking of the five hundred, he says, "of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep."²³ By referring to the many living witnesses, Paul seems to be saying, "Go check with them if you like. They will tell you of the truth of the Resurrection." There is no attitude of apology or deceit but an indirect challenge to

²³ I. Cor. 15:6.

people in a position to confirm the Resurrection claim.

A similar claim is made by Paul as he presents the story of Jesus to the Jews and proselytes in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia.

And though they found no cause of death in him, yet asked they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people.²⁴

Studying the book of Acts, one is impressed that perhaps more than any other single thing the approach of the early church was to bear testimony to Jesus, making His Resurrection the central point. "And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."²⁵ It was the insistence on this witness that stirred the opposition to severe measures. This is partly understandable because the leaders were reminded that whom they had rejected, God had vindicated, and that they bore the blame and guilt for Jesus' death. The first imprisonment took place when the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees "came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead."²⁶

²⁴ Acts 13:28-31.

²⁵ Acts 4:33.

²⁶ Acts 4:1-2.

Felix, the Roman governor, "having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, . . ." ²⁷ may well have had in mind the emphasis of the New Testament church as well as the key of contention between the Jews and the prisoner Paul when he explained to Agrippa, "Concerning whom Paul, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." ²⁸

The Preaching Emphasis. Current New Testament scholarship is placing great emphasis on the kerygma or preaching content of the early church, feeling thus to penetrate to basic material behind the written accounts of Jesus' life and the history of the early church. While some of this study is extreme in its presuppositions, method, and conclusions, yet none dare assert that the emphasis on the Resurrection of Jesus is a late addition. ²⁹ Our only source for actual sermons, sermon summaries, and sermon outlines, is the book of Acts to which some reference has been made. However, a survey of the whole of these sermons shows that more often than not the Resurrection was the chief point, or the point of climax. One-third of Peter's sermon at Pente-

²⁷ Acts 24:22.

²⁸ Acts 25:18-19.

²⁹ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Kendrick Grobel, Translator (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), Vol. I, p. 77.

cost centers on this theme. After showing that Jesus' Resurrection was a part of the Old Testament prophetic picture of the Messiah and declaring their having seen Jesus alive after His crucifixion, Peter drove home the barb which "pricked" their hearts. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."³⁰ In the five addresses of Peter which were given before enemies or non-believers, all reach their climax in the declaration of the Resurrection.³¹ Paul preached the Resurrection at Antioch,³² Thessalonica,³³ and Athens.³⁴ The Athenian account is especially interesting because it was this very doctrine which brought opposition and ridicule.³⁵ It was not the popularity of the doctrine that made him preach it! Could it not have been rather that he proclaimed it because he was convinced it was true? Like Peter, Paul declared the Resurrection when bound and when free.³⁶ With Peter also he used the Resurrection of Jesus as evidence of His Messiahship.³⁷ When Peter preached on for-

³⁰ Acts 2:36.

³¹ Cf. Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43.

³² Acts 13:30-31.

³³ Acts 17:1-3.

³⁴ Acts 17:22-31

³⁵ Acts 17:18 and 17:32.

³⁶ Cf. Acts 24:15, 25; 26:8, 23.

³⁷ Cf. Acts 2:24-36 with Acts 17:2-3.

giveness, it was Jesus' Resurrection which qualified Him as Savior³⁸ and hence remission of sins was in His name.³⁹ Paul carries the same theme and asserts that through this man "whom God rasied again . . . is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."⁴⁰ No less emphatically is the Resurrected Jesus proclaimed as Judge before whom the unrepentant must stand. Peter⁴¹ and Paul⁴² concur in associating these cardinal doctrines with one another.

Thus the preaching of the apostles was Resurrection-centered. This is confirmed in First Corinthians fifteen where Paul outlines the gospel that he had preached at Corinth, a gospel which also he "received," a gospel of Christ's sacrificial death, burial, and Resurrection.⁴³

The Resurrection in the Epistles. Thus far we have largely confined our investigation to the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and First Corinthians fifteen. We dare not omit at least a complete sampling of the Resurrection emphasis in the entire body of Epistles. Running the risk of being tedious, we pursue this study to enforce the conviction that the first generation Christians believed that

³⁸ Acts 5:31.

³⁹ Acts 10:43.

⁴⁰ Acts 13:37-39.

⁴¹ Acts 10:42.

⁴² Acts 17:31.

⁴³ I Cor. 15:1-8.

Jesus rose from the dead.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."⁴⁴ One can readily assume when reading the works of many modern doubters and disbelievers that they regret Paul's using the Resurrection as such a touchstone of faith. Would it not be more proper to say to believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Did not he instruct the Philippian jailor to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, . . ."⁴⁵ There is in no sense a contradiction. To confess Jesus as "Lord" is a confession of a submission and a commitment. To believe that "God raised him from the dead" is to acknowledge both his Divine Person and supernatural credentials. The Resurrection of Jesus is an inseparable part of the gospel Paul preached. "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel: . . ."⁴⁶ It is God's seal of approval, His vindication that this Jesus is the Christ, the very Son of God. Paul is an apostle,

. . . separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord. . . .⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Romans 10:9.

⁴⁵ Acts 16:31.

⁴⁶ II Timothy 2:8.

⁴⁷ Romans 1:1-4.

So often in the Epistles God is referred to as the "God who raised Jesus from the dead," that it almost assumes the proportions of being a title for the Divine Person.⁴⁸ This term is found not only in the writings of Paul⁴⁹ but also of Peter⁵⁰ and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁵¹

A major New Testament theme is that of immortality. However, it is most intimately connected with the Resurrection of Jesus. His Resurrection is the basis of the assurance that we have for our own. We have faith "knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, . . ."⁵² "And God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through his power."⁵³ "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep."⁵⁴ The entire fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians was written to a group of people who were saying, "there is no hope of immortality, of our resurrection from the dead." Paul's answer hinges on the promise and assurance revealed in Christ's Resurrection. He arose. We too shall rise!

Christ's Resurrection is not only our anchor of hope

⁴⁸ Rudolph Bultmann, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 81.

⁴⁹ Romans 4:24; 8:11; and Gal. 1:1.

⁵⁰ I Peter 1:21.

⁵¹ Hebrews 13:20.

⁵² II Cor. 4:14; cf. also II Timothy 2:8-10.

⁵³ I Cor. 6:14.

⁵⁴ I Cor. 15:20; cf. also I Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:10-11; and Rev. 1:18.

concerning the life to come, but is also our assurance that the power of God is available to perform the miracle of regeneration, empowering, and sanctification in our own lives. The apostle Paul casts aside, so to speak, his most attractive credentials, "counting them but refuse," that he might know Christ "and the power of his resurrection . . ."⁵⁵

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.⁵⁶

There is no mistaking the relationship between that power demonstrated on the first Easter morning and the moral power which is given to us who believe in the Resurrected One. It is fitting to pray that we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His "power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, . . ."⁵⁷

In Romans 6:4-11 Paul uses this same idea in a slightly different way. Christ's death and Resurrection become an analogy to our Christian life. As He died, we must die to sin. As He rose again, we must "walk in newness of life."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Philippians 3:10.

⁵⁶ Romans 8:11.

⁵⁷ Ephesians 1:19-20. W. W. White says of this verse, "No portion of the Bible of equal length has such a heaping together of words for power. Let us never forget it. God is able." Wilbert W. White, The Resurrection Body "According to the Scriptures." (Albany, N. Y.: Press of Frank H. Every and Co., 1923), pp. 86-87.

⁵⁸ Cf. also II Corinthians 3:11;13:4; Colossians 2:12;

The Dependent Issues. In consideration of the above it is not to be wondered that one has said, "The fact of belief in the resurrection of Jesus by the early Christians is almost the most obtrusive feature of the New Testament."⁵⁹ But we are not finished! What of the doctrines which are not always so specifically connected as the above, but which are nevertheless dependent upon the belief that Jesus overcame death? Throughout the New Testament, aside from the gospels, runs the firm conviction that Jesus was then alive, mystically present, and still described pictorially as at the right hand of the Father. How essential is this belief to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus which is the center of the book of Hebrews. From the pronouncement, "I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, . . ."⁶⁰ to the final cry, "Yea; I come quickly," and the response, "Amen: Come Lord Jesus," the Apocalypse breathes with the certainty that Jesus lives. "The Lord is at hand."⁶¹ "Lo, I

3:1-3; I Peter 3:21-22. Another interesting verse is Romans 4:25 which refers to the resurrected Christ as He "who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." The preposition "for" hardly expresses the meaning of the original. He was delivered up on account of our trespasses and raised in view of our justification.

⁵⁹ White, op. cit., p. 70.

⁶⁰ Revelation 1:17-18.

⁶¹ Philippians 4:5.

am with you always, even unto the end of the world."⁶²

Nor are we through. The Christian hope, which is as contemporary as the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, was a live issue to the first century Christians. Jesus, using the utmost care to avoid the setting of the date of His second coming,⁶³ nevertheless assured them that He would return.

For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.⁶⁴

Surely we are not being too bold to say that the first century Church considered the Resurrection of Jesus as the pivotal fact of the New Testament. Who would dare to assert that it was a secondary doctrine or that they believed not that Jesus conquered death? They were persecuted, beaten and martyred.⁶⁵ They endured such treatment, yes, rather rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ."⁶⁶ The first recorded martyr in his dying pain cried out, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing

⁶² Matthew 28:20.

⁶³ See Matthew 24:36..

⁶⁴ I Thessalonians 1:9-10.

⁶⁵ Acts 12:1-2.

⁶⁶ Acts 5:42.

on the right hand of God."⁶⁷ The Resurrection power proved to be available as he prayed, challenged death, addressing his prayer to the risen, living Jesus: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit. . . . Lord lay not this sin to their charge."

"And when he had said this he fell asleep."⁶⁸

The New Testament Church believed Jesus rose from the dead! The New Testament Church believed indeed! Not passively, but actively. Not theoretically, but existentially. They marvelled at the Resurrection, revelled in it, rejoiced in it. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"⁶⁹

We have to face these radiant men. Somehow, we have to account for them and their revolutionizing belief. How did they ever come to believe and so triumphantly live their belief?

Before answering this question, however, let us note what students of history have said about the belief of the first century Christians.

III. THE TESTIMONY OF THE STUDENTS OF HISTORY

General Statements. So long as we set the limit of

⁶⁷ Acts 7:56.

⁶⁸ Acts 7:59-60.

⁶⁹ Romans 8:34-35.

our investigation as to whether the disciples believed that Jesus rose from the dead the conclusion is all but unanimous. The only exception would be the dwindling few who hold with the ancient enemies of the church that the disciples stole the body or in some other way defrauded the world,⁷⁰ and that the faith was not genuine.⁷¹ Without this faith the origin of the Christian church is an enigma. As a recent writer has said,

The historical life of Jesus ended with Good Friday. The Christian church was born when his disciples were convinced that this was not the end, but God had raised him from the dead. Without that belief, Jesus would have remained a forgotten Jewish teacher who had supposed that he would be the Messiah. Without that belief there never would have been a Christian church. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that belief in the resurrection of Jesus is the best-attested fact of ancient history.⁷²

Dr. Latourette of Yale says that this "conviction of the resurrection of Jesus" is a subject open to the ready verification by the modern historian.⁷³ In his more recent one-volume set on church history he says, "It is abundantly affirmed that the disciples were profoundly convinced that they had seen the risen Jesus, . . ."⁷⁴

⁷⁰ See Matthew 28:11-15.

⁷¹ This will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

⁷² Clarence Tucker Craig, The Beginning of Christianity (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953), p. 133. *Italics mine.*

⁷³ Latourette, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 59.

⁷⁴ Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 58.

Many have shared the conviction of Dr. Harold Paul Sloan, who asserts,

The Christian church rests down ultimately upon one most astonishing fact--the fact that the original Christian witnesses did proclaim Jesus of Nazareth to have risen from the dead, leaving His sepulcher open and empty behind Him.⁷⁵

The Testimony of Critics. The accusation may be made that we are here giving the testimony of men who are prejudiced by their Christian faith. Yet some of the most severe critics of Christianity and of the reality of Christ's Resurrection in particular have had to concede the point under discussion. David Friedrich Strauss, leader in the nineteenth century radical interpretation of Jesus and His life, is quoted as saying, "Only this much need we acknowledge, that the Apostles firmly believed that Jesus had risen. . . . Without the faith of the Apostles in the resurrection of Jesus, the church would never have been born."⁷⁶ A contemporary French theologian who allows little or no place for the supernatural in his interpretation of the Christian church has to concede that "the creative source of Christianity was the faith in the risen and glorified Jesus."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Harold Paul Sloan, He is Risen (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1942), p. 19. Cf. also Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), Vol. I, pp. 172-173.

⁷⁶ Quote in White, op. cit., p. 73.

⁷⁷ Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 29.

Secular Historians. Where secular historians have been inclined to comment on the origin of Christianity this same point has been conceded. Dr. Arnold Toynbee in his impressive ten-volume study of history does not allude to whether or not the immediate disciples of Jesus believed in the Resurrection, but he is unusually impressed by the early Christian martyrs' rare act "in which the object for which men and women were prepared to give their lives was a church and not a state."⁷⁸ He further confesses that their willingness to die was intrinsically tied to their faith in Jesus' Resurrection and Resurrection promises.⁷⁹ Thus these spiritual children and grandchildren were true descendants of those believers who professed to see Jesus alive after His death on the cross.⁸⁰

IV. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER II

As a point of reference to which we will return many times in this thesis, this chapter has shown that the first century Christians--the founders of the Christian church--believed that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. In order to prove this we have given a brief summary of the place of the

⁷⁸ Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), Vol. IX, p. 396.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 522.

⁸⁰ For the report of other secular historians compare Walter T. Walbank and Alastair M. Taylor, Civilization Past and Present (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1942), Vol. I, p. 189.

Resurrection in the writings and thought of the New Testament, after having shown that the New Testament is a valid source-book for the problem at hand. So basic is the Resurrection to every part of the New Testament that the belief of the early Christians cannot be doubted. That they believed Jesus arose is affirmed by historians as "the best attested fact of ancient history."⁸¹ Religious and secular, devout and skeptic, are willing to concede this vital point. Hence we consider it adequately proved and are willing to put the burden of proof on any who wish to take it up to show that such a Resurrection faith did not exist.

⁸¹ Cf. James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), p. 91.

CHAPTER III

THE SEARCH FOR AN ADEQUATE CAUSE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEF

Thus we are faced with a fact, established in history. The disciples of Jesus and many of their contemporaries fully believed that Jesus rose from the dead. Fortunately, we are not without evidence as to how this belief was inspired. It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate this "cause" of an acknowledged "effect." Such a cause there had to be¹ and we here intend to evaluate the proposed causes.

I. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AN "ADEQUATE CAUSE"

"To accept an inadequate explanation for an undeniable fact is credulity in one of its worst forms."² The nature of the "effect" under consideration is such that any adequate "cause" must have certain features that correspond. Of these we will observe three.

Sufficient Strength. An outstanding aspect of the

¹ Cf. statement of James E. Dean, Keys that Unlock the Scriptures (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1953), p. 156.

² Charles Reade, quote in Wilbert W. White, The Resurrection Body "According to the Scriptures" (Albany, N. Y.: Frank H. Every & Co., 1923), p. 71.

belief in the Resurrection as found in the first century Christians was their utter conviction that it was true. This is wonderfully demonstrated by the spirit of the Church and the manner in which the witness was borne. Men of simple background, men who had formerly been put to flight by the threat of danger, stand before the acknowledged leaders of the Jews and fearlessly proclaim that Christ had risen from the dead.³ The force of their conviction is emphasized further by the realization that it was these leaders who had put Jesus to death only a short time before, and that prior to Jesus' Resurrection the disciples in question were cowering in their locked room in "fear of the Jews."⁴ This utter conviction that Jesus had risen was unshaken in persecution and martyrdom.⁵ On the strength of it Saul of Tarsus, a man of culture, training and promise cast aside his acknowledge assets, rather counted them "loss" and "refuse" that he might know Christ "and the power of his resurrection."⁶ Saul, the student of Gamaliel, willingly became a social outcast on the strength of his conviction. The whole New Testament breathes with the triumphant certainty of their faith. Our proposed cause must carry in it the certainty demonstrated in the apostles' lives.

³ Acts 4:5-12; 5:26-32.

⁴ John 20:19.

⁵ Acts 7.

⁶ Philippians 3:4-12.

The terrors and the persecutions which the men ultimately had to face and did face unflinchingly, do not admit of a half-hearted adhesion secretly honeycombed with doubt. The belief had to be unconditional and of adamant strength to satisfy the conditions.⁷

Sufficient Presentability. Consider the situation in Jerusalem in the fourth decade of the first century A.D. A group of ordinary men including fishermen and a tax collector, mostly from the despised country province of Galilee, declare that an event of cosmic and universal significance, something hitherto unheard of, had taken place. They had the audacity to declare this within walking distance of the site where the occurrence was supposed to have transpired. They faced the severe and public disapproval of the respected religious authorities. Despite these seemingly unsurmountable handicaps they convinced literally thousands⁸ of people that Jesus had risen from the dead. Included among these, we are told, were "a great number of priests" who "were obedient to the faith."⁹ For those who would hesitate to accept the report of the early Church relative to the number of believers we merely remind them that within five or six years it had spread as far as Damascus¹⁰ and by the seventh decade had a sufficient number of believers in dis-

⁷ Frank Morison, Who Moved the Stone? (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1930), p. 114.

⁸ Acts 2:41; 4:4.

⁹ Acts 6:7.

¹⁰ Acts 9.

tant Rome, the center of the Empire, to become the target of persecution under Nero.¹¹ Thus, whatever cause we ascribe to the Resurrection faith, it must have in it elements which would serve as definite proof to men and women in Jerusalem in the fourth decade of the first century A.D. We need to bear in mind that from the beginning Christianity was a public religion. It was no secret society. Hence the argument or proof for Jesus' Resurrection was open to investigation and challenge. "If the belief was to spread it had to bite its way into the corporate consciousness by convincing argument and attempted proof."¹² The witnesses must be sufficiently understandable and consistent, the evidence sufficiently plausible to convince men against their natural prejudice and circumstance that Jesus was the living Christ. Consider as only one of these prejudices the prevailing Jewish idea that all suffering was a sign of sin and hence of God's direct punishment.¹³ Since Jesus died on the cross like a common criminal, He must have appeared to them to be doubly cursed.¹⁴ Yet many people were convinced, and even the religious leaders who fought fanatically showed signs of doubting their position.¹⁵ Hence clarity of witness and

¹¹ Tacitus, Annals, Book XV, No. 44.

¹² Morison, op. cit., p. 114.

¹³ Cf. John 9:2.

¹⁴ Cf. Galatians 3:13, a quotation of Deuteronomy 21:23.

¹⁵ Cf. Acts 4:13 and 5:33-40.

possibility of reasonable proof are necessary ingredients to whatever cause one would ascribe to the apostles' belief.

Consistent Moral Quality. Here again we note an outstanding feature associated with the Resurrection preaching. These men had not only a sense of mission, which made silence an impossible alternative,¹⁶ but a Divine compulsion to tell the truth. Thus we have the reply of Peter and John when the demand was made that they cease to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things we saw and heard."¹⁷ Nor did the apostles cease to speak. In a short time they were again before the council. On this occasion "Peter and the apostles" even more emphatically related this sense of righteous obligation to the Resurrection message.

We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.¹⁸

Paul who so strongly defended his sincerity and honest before God¹⁹ recoiled in horror and said, "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God: because we witnessed of God

¹⁶ Cf. Acts 5:41-42.

¹⁷ Acts 4:19-20.

¹⁸ Acts 5:29-32.

¹⁹ Cf. Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:19-20.

that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised."²⁰

It is noteworthy in this regard that these men were preachers of repentance. To say the least, this is an unusual subject for a group of men if they did not have a personal conviction of their own honesty and that they were doing the right thing. Not only did they preach repentance, but people were convicted by their preaching. It is conceivable that an insincere man might for a time convince someone to repent by sheer oratory and power of persuasion. But to doubt the sincerity of this group of men who led many to repent of their sins and into a new moral life, not over a short period, but for decades--to doubt their sincerity is utterly impossible. These men were Jews who of all the people of the world at that time had perhaps the keenest sense of right and wrong and a genuine abhorrence for the liar.²² Add to all this the incident of Ananias and Sapphira which occurred early in the history of the Church, and is a forceful object lesson against deceit. Whatever was the inspiration of the Resurrection faith of the early Church, it must be consistent with this standard of right and wrong.

²⁰ I Corinthians 15:15.

²¹ Cf. Acts 2:37-42; 3:19, 26; 4:12; 10:43; 13:38-39; 17:30-31; 20:21.

²² Cf. the universal disdain for the hypocrites as in Matthew 6 and 23.

II. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CAUSE AS GIVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

According to the combined accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus given in our New Testament and the accepted chronology in the same, the Resurrection faith was born in the following manner. The disciples of Jesus had accompanied their teacher to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover feast. The enemies of Jesus accosted Him late Thursday night, gave Him a hasty hearing, had Him condemned by Pilate, the Roman governor, and on Friday He was crucified. Before evening He was dead, His death occurring sooner than usual, but in order to insure His death a spear was thrust in His side by a soldier. Since the Jewish Sabbath, which in this event was also the Passover celebration, began at sunset on Friday evening, it was desirable to quickly entomb the body of Jesus. A secret disciple, Joseph of Arimathaea,²³ asked for the body of Jesus, wrapped it with cloth, intermingled with spices, and put it in his own new tomb which was in a garden nearby.²⁴ A large stone was rolled before the door as was the custom. Some specified women observed the location of the tomb,²⁵ and some time the next day a guard was placed at the tomb by the Jewish authorities.²⁶

As to the whereabouts of the twelve disciples between

²³ John 19:34;38 ff.

²⁴ Matthew 27:57-61.

²⁵ Mark 15:46-47; Gr. also 16:4.

²⁶ Matthew 27:62-66.

the arrest and the burial we have little information. John and Peter were near the trial and John is mentioned as being at the cross.²⁷ Little is known of the activities of Saturday, except that being the Sabbath they "rested."²⁸ We also have indication of their shock and fear,²⁹ as one might anticipate.³⁰

The chronology of the Sunday events are not easily arranged, but the following significant events took place.³¹ Women going early to the tomb to bring spices and ointments were surprised to find the stone removed. Mary Magdalene, one of the women, ran to tell the disciples, supposing the tomb to have been rifled.³² Others saw angelic visitors which instructed them to inform the disciples of Jesus' Resurrection and a coming appointment in Galilee.³³ Peter and John ran to the tomb and examined the inner evidence which included the empty graveclothes, left in such a way as to offer convincing proof of Jesus Resurrection.³⁴ As

²⁷ John 19:26-27.

²⁸ Luke 23:56.

²⁹ Mark 16:10; John 20:19.

³⁰ A detailed study and evaluation of the various emotional reactions will be given in Chapter IV.

³¹ For a good chronology of Sunday events see, Brooks Foss Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John (London: John Murray, 1909), Vol. II, pp. 335-336.

³² John 20:1-2.

³³ Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-8.

³⁴ John 20:3-10.

they returned home, Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and saw Jesus alive. He spoke to her but forbade her to hold on to Him.³⁵ Other of the women saw Jesus.³⁶ He appeared to Peter.³⁷ He appeared to two on the road to Emmaus,³⁸ and that evening to the assembled disciples.³⁹

At least four other appearances are recorded including one at which five hundred were present.⁴⁰ It need be noted here that there is thus reported a good number of appearances to many different people under varying circumstances and in various places. The appearances covered a period of forty days.⁴¹

These reports are marked by a unique combination of the natural and supernatural as relates to the person of Jesus. Jesus walks with them, sits down at the table with them, breaks bread, distributes it, eats.⁴² He shows

³⁵ John 20:11-18.

³⁶ Matthew 28:9-10.

³⁷ Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5.

³⁸ Luke 24:13-35.

³⁹ Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23; possibly I Corinthians 15:5.

⁴⁰ I Corinthians 15:6. This may be the same meeting reported in Matthew 28:11-15. The other appearances are to James reported in I Corinthians 15:7, to the apostles, to remove Thomas' doubts--John 20:24-29; to the disciples on Lake Galilee, John 21; and at the Ascension, Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:1-11.

⁴¹ Acts 1:3.

⁴² Luke 24:15,30,43; also John 21:13.

them His hands and His side and offers His wounds to be touched.⁴³ People on seeing Him sense that He is a real person and desire to touch Him.⁴⁴ He speaks to them, instructs them,⁴⁵ and commands them to evangelize the world.⁴⁶ All of these facts emphasize His identity and reality.⁴⁷

On the other hand, certain aspects of His existence were in great contrast to normal human life. His appearance is usually sudden and mysterious.⁴⁸ On two occasions He suddenly joined them when the doors were locked.⁴⁹ His departures were often made in the same manner.⁵⁰ They did not always recognize Him immediately;⁵¹ they even sometimes doubted as to His identity,⁵² and were alarmed, thinking they had seen a spirit.⁵³ On occasion some fell down before Him and offered Him divine honors.⁵⁴ From these

⁴³ John 20:20-27.

⁴⁴ John 20:17; Matthew 28:9.

⁴⁵ Luke 24:27, 45; Acts 1:3.

⁴⁶ Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-48; Acts 1:8.

⁴⁷ Cf. Bernard Weiss, The Life of Christ, M. G. Hope, translator (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884), Vol. III, 391.

⁴⁸ Luke 24:36; John 20:14; 21:4.

⁴⁹ John 20:19, 26.

⁵⁰ Luke 24:31, 51.

⁵¹ Luke 24:16-31; John 20:14 f; 21:4-7.

⁵² Matthew 28:17.

⁵³ Luke 24:37.

⁵⁴ John 20:17-28; Matthew 28:9-17.

features the disciples deduced that Jesus had not merely returned to earthly existence.⁵⁵ Thus Jesus' body is referred to as a "glorified" body, one like His human body "with splendid additions."⁵⁶

Jesus having thus appeared, leaving His graveclothes behind Him, convinced His disciples of His victory over the grave and of His having personally entered into immortality. Such is the Biblical account. Bearing these facts in mind we will now proceed to examine the alternate causes which have been suggested for the Resurrection belief, reserving our evaluation of the above until the others have been considered.

III. ALTERNATE SUGGESTED CAUSES WITH EVALUATIONS

The Theory of Fraud. This is perhaps both the oldest and newest accusation brought against the Resurrection of Jesus. Its oldest form centers its interest in the disappearance of the body of Jesus. This was no doubt one of the strongest evidences that the early Christians had to present to enforce the plausibility of the Resurrection. The Jews accused the disciples of removing the body of

⁵⁵ Cf. Weiss, op. cit., pp. 285, 291

⁵⁶ Cf. Olin Alfred Curtis, The Christian Faith Personally Given in a System of Doctrine (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1905), p. 410. For a further study of the nature of the Resurrection body the student is referred to White, op. cit., pp. 15-27; or Orr, op. cit., pp. 188-189.

Jesus and then claiming that He rose from the dead.⁵⁷ Nearly one hundred and fifty years later the Jews were still pursuing the same line of thought.⁵⁸ In reality the assertion that the disciples took the body is an indirect testimony that something unusual happened to the body of Jesus. There is no reason but to believe that Jesus' enemies as well as His friends inspected the empty tomb. In the sermon by Peter at Pentecost only seven weeks after Jesus' burial the empty tomb is implied as he says the prophecy of the Resurrection given by David could not have applied to the writer.

"Brethren, I say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day."⁵⁹ Could not the Jews have silenced forever the claim of the Resurrection if they could have produced the body of Jesus? This same thought precludes the possibility that the enemies of Jesus stole His body although such a

⁵⁷ Matthew 28:11-15. An influential eighteenth century advocate of this position was Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) whom Albert Schweitzer considers to have written the first attempted historical life of Jesus and who strongly contended for deliberate fraud. See Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, a Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1936), Second English Edition, p. 21.

⁵⁸ Origin, Against Gelsus, II, 55, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1887), Vol. IV, p. 453. Origin (c.185-254 A.D.) wrote these documents to refute the writings of a certain Gelsus whose dates are unknown but is believed to have written his attack on the Christians between 161 and 180 A.D., as reported in Vol. IV above on page 231.

⁵⁹ Acts 2:29.

contradiction has not been without advocates in the long struggle to discredit the Resurrection.⁶⁰

Evaluation of Fraud Theory. That the disciples deliberately took the body of Jesus and thus perpetuated a fraud has long been discarded by serious scholars. One of the most recent declarations regarding this issue states, "So far as I know there is not a single writer whose work is of critical value to-day who holds that there is even a case for discussion."⁶¹ Modern Jewish scholarship acknowledges only that "the grave in which his corpse had been laid had been found empty."⁶² The central reason for the utter discreditation of the fraud theory is the third principle of evaluation referred to above. The words of Reverend A. M. Fairbairn well summarize the issue involved.

A sane and honorable and informed spirit could never either conceive or believe such a theory. That a company of men could be confederate in evil for purpose of good; that they could be throughout life a society of organized hypocrites without ever smiling to each other or letting the mask fall; that they

⁶⁰ Cf. Albert Reville, Jesus of Nazareth, II, p. 420 f, as quoted in Doremus A. Haynes, The Resurrection Fact (Nashville, Tenn., Cokesbury Press, 1932), p. 280.

⁶¹ Frank Morison, Who Moved The Stone? (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1930), p. 88.

⁶² Ernst Jacob, "Christianity," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1941 Edition, Vol. III, p. 177. Also see Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching, Herbert Danby, Translator (New York: Macmillan Company, 1925). In discussing the charge of trickery and fraud he says, "This is impossible; deliberate imposture is not the substance out of which the religion of millions of mankind is created." P. 357.

could preach virtue or live virtuously with a damning lie on their consciences; that they could nurse their souls, most of all in the very face of death, in the hope of being with Christ forever in blessedness, while aware that he was rotting in an unknown grave--are positions that involve so many psychological impossibilities that any grave discussion of the matter is simply absurd.⁶³

It should be noted that this explanation falls not only on the third criteria, that is, consistent moral quality, but also on the first criteria of being a cause which lacks the sufficient strength to produce the known effect.

Modern Fraud Theories. The modern attempt is much more far-reaching than the ancient Jewish assertion that Jesus' body was stolen by the disciples. It does not worry about the empty tomb as such but denies the historicity of everything connected with the Resurrection of Jesus and for that matter most of Jesus' recorded life. The New Testament accounts according to these critics are nothing more nor less than stories or myths made up by the early Church to make vivid certain ideas and experiences they were trying to explain. These men may to their own satisfaction get rid of the New Testament but they cannot escape history in general. On the foundation of faith laid by these New Testament men a mighty structure, the Christian church, has been raised up. If we are to reverse the order which says the Resurrection faith is the explanation of the life and

⁶³ A. M. Fairbairn, Studies in the Life of Christ (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882), p. 337.

actions of the New Testament men and say instead that the men created the faith and all of the stories woven about it, we must rightfully ask just how did these stories arise.

Here is where the theory of fraud enters in. We are told that it was a sort of pious fraud, a case of the end justifying the means. No more elaborate and forthright statement of this can be found than the recent book by Hall Caine.⁶⁴ He confessed not to believe any of the Resurrection stories that have come down to us,⁶⁵ but is constantly confronted with the proven historical fact that the Apostolic Church really believed that Jesus rose from the dead.⁶⁶ How then did we get the gospel records? The pressure of making others believe made it necessary for the early Church to color up the stories. They "honestly made themselves believe" for example that Jesus made the predictions relative to His coming death and Resurrection, and wrote it back into the gospel account.⁶⁷ Thus this forgery was "not deliberate . . . but a kind of honest self-deception, . . ."⁶⁸

The early Christians had to convince the unbelieving Jews,⁶⁹ thus how necessary it was to make up the story of

⁶⁴ Hall Caine, Life of Christ (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1938), 1310 pp.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 1002, 1032.

⁶⁶ cf., ibid., pp. 1002, 1023, 1036.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 1000.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 1001.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 1035.

the unbelieving Thomas. They had to convince this unbelieving world that they were not "merely dreaming, that they were not mere visionaries, intoxicated (however innocently) by their faith."⁷⁰ These additions not only were to convince the world but "above all" to help them "to go on believing this themselves."⁷¹ Out of this "hard necessity" came the other stories to supplement that of the original by Mary Magdalene.⁷²

Thus, the apostles, in the early years, met the objections of unbelievers by making the risen Christ a being who ate and drank and was in all respects the same after his Resurrection as he had been before his death.⁷³

Everything said about the impossibility of accepting the charge that the disciples stole the body of Jesus argues equally against the above contention. As the discovery of ancient manuscripts and the advance of archaeological research keeps pushing the New Testament writings nearer and nearer the original apostles, the less "pious" becomes the alleged manufacture of the Resurrection "myth" and the more untenable the position that this is the true interpretation of things.

Another serious objection is that if the Resurrection stories are created by the Resurrection faith rather than an account of how it originated, we still have to discover the

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 1036.

⁷¹ Loc. cit.

⁷² Ibid., p. 1122.

⁷³ Loc. cit. Italics mine.

cause of the said faith. This will be considered more in detail in a later part of this chapter,⁷⁴ as well as in Chapter four.

Resuscitation or Swoon Theory. This theory tries to preserve the integrity of the disciples, at least in part, and at the same time account for the empty tomb and reality of Jesus' appearances, but not to concede that there was anything supernatural involved. It has been noted that Jesus died comparatively soon after being crucified. According to this theory He never really died but merely swooned. The cool tomb and the invigorating spices were instrumental in causing Him to revive. Hence He appeared to the disciples and convinced them of His Messiahship.

Historically this has been a favorite with a whole series of fictitious "Lives" of Jesus which gave no particular attention to the original records. Karl Heinrich Venturini (1768-1849), was the father of this series with advocates as late as 1905 who usually represent Jesus as a member of a secret sect of the Essenes. His "death" ranged from mere feigning to a special trance or normal unconsciousness. His Essene "brothers" helped Him revive and provided a place of concealment when He was not making "appearances."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Cf. post pp. 68 ff.

⁷⁵ Regarding Venturini cf. Schweitzer, op. cit., pp. 44-47. Others of this group include: Charles Christian Hennell (1809-1874), Ibid., p. 162; Joseph Salvador (1796-1873), loc. cit.; August Friedrich Gfrorer (1803-1876),

Much more serious in nature were certain nineteenth century attempts to explain Jesus' Resurrection in this manner in order to be consistent with their naturalistic philosophy. Heinrich E. G. Paulus is the ablest exponent of this group. He presents Jesus as being in a deathlike trance when placed in the grave. A series of fortunate circumstances assisted His recovery, including the things mentioned above. Even the lance-thrust served as the then popular treatment of blood-letting and hence assisted in Jesus' recovery! The earthquake jarred Him to full consciousness. Taking off His graveclothes He put on a gradener's dress He had managed to procure. For forty days He made various contacts with His disciples but the weakness resulting from His ill treatment made it necessary to spend much time apart to gather strength for His last appearance. Knowing His end was near, He called His disciples early in the morning as a cloud was hanging around the top of the Mount of Olives. He backed up the mountain with His hands raised in an attitude of blessing, becoming hidden in the cloud. He was never seen again!⁷⁶ In the latter half of the nineteenth century this theory was given additional prestige by having the support of Friedrich Schleiermacher⁷⁷

¹*ibid.*, p. 165; P. A. Desjardin (Paul de Regla, Pseud.) (1838-n.d.), *ibid.*, p. 325; Emilie Lerou (Pierre Nahor, Pseud.), (1855-1935), *loc. cit.*

⁷⁶ Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. See also Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1928), English Translation of Second German Edition, p. 420.

Evaluation of Swoon Theory. Using our "criteria for evaluation" this theory falls on the same basis as the fraud theory fell, especially on the basis of being of insufficient strength to account for the known effect. David Friedrich Strauss has never endeared himself to the friends of orthodoxy, but to clear the ground for his own unique interpretation of the Resurrection he demolished this theory which had never been successfully propagated since. Condemning this theory on its evident insufficient strength, Strauss declares,

It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still, at last yielded to his sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that he was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which he had made upon them in life and in death, at the most it could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, have elevated their reverence into worship.⁷⁸

It should perhaps be pointed out also that the disciples failed to ever make any of the same associations with the resuscitated Lazarus or others that were raised by Jesus, considering them divine, conquerors of death, etc. No, they presented Jesus' Resurrection as distinctly unique, as something new in the history of mankind. Hence, if Jesus merely swooned and recovered, they are guilty of deliberately mis-

⁷⁸ David Friedrich Strauss, A New Life of Jesus (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), Vol. I, p. 412.

representing the facts, a position which for the reasons given above cannot be accepted.

Subjective Vision or Hallucination Theory. The vision hypothesis has been presented as both subjective and objective. The subjective theory is built on the proposition that there was no real objective stimulation corresponding to the impression received by the recipient. The nineteenth century French philosopher, Ernest Renan (1823-1892), produced a Life of Christ and a book entitled The Apostles which presented this view in a popular fashion. Mary Magdalene is the key figure in his presentation. The miracle of the Resurrection was performed when the little group, led by Mary "resuscitated Jesus in their hearts by the intense love which they bore towards him."⁷⁹ In the Easter dawn Mary with her heart bursting with love comes to the tomb and finds it empty. In a state of confusion she runs to the disciples. Two come and confirm that the tomb is empty, but Mary lingers. She hears a rustling, thinks she sees someone in the shadows, calls out and then hears her name, "Mary." "It was the accent of Jesus. 'Oh, my master!' she cries. She is about to touch him. A sort of instinctive movement throws her at his feet to kiss them. The light vision draws back and says to her, 'Touch me not.' Little by little the shadow disappears."⁸⁰ Mary's overwrought

⁷⁹ Ernest Renan, The Apostles (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1895), p. 45.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

emotions have produced the first witness. "The miracle of love is accomplished. . . . After Jesus, it is Mary who has done most for the foundation of Christianity. The shadow created by the delicate sensitivity of Magdalene hovers still over the world."⁸¹ From then on it was relatively simple. The other women see some graveclothes in the tomb and imagine an angel. The whole group were extremely ignorant and simple.⁸² A stranger walked with the two on the road to Emmaus, stopping for dinner. While they absently mused at the table, he stepped out. They then imagined it was Jesus.⁸³ The "appearances" to the disciples while the doors were shut were inspired by the wind rattling the windows.⁸⁴ And so with all the appearances.

With modifications this theory still has its champions. However, Paul rather than Mary Magdalene is more often taken as the supreme example of the one experiencing subjective visions, and the others evaluated by him. This is not always easy since Paul was the last rather than the first witness. Goguel attempts the visionary explanation and after a minute examination of Paul and an indication that he will adequately explain all of the others also, he suddenly concludes the entire subject:

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 48-49.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 54.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

The first appearances were different in character, because they happened to men who had been attached to Jesus but had never thought of his returning to life. Nevertheless, as far as one can judge in the absence of any direct documentary evidence, the vision's mechanism appears to have been the same. Before there was any belief that he would appear posthumously there existed the conviction that Christ was alive in heaven. This explains the visions.⁸⁵

Goguel, who discounts any possibility of Jesus having predicted His Resurrection,⁸⁶ ignoring of course the New Testament statements to the contrary, then proceeds to show that Jesus saw His death coming and anticipated His exaltation to heaven,⁸⁷ an idea quite unassociated with a "resurrection." This latter nebulous concept was implanted in the minds of the disciples. Out of this grew, not unlike Renan's miracle of love, "a miracle of faith."⁸⁸ From this idea that Jesus had gone to heaven, Goguel proceeds:

After his death faith in him could only last or be reborn if he had triumphed over death and so could be regarded as a living person. Faith in the heavenly Christ not only extended the hopes which the disciples had placed in Jesus; it exalted and adapted them to the changed circumstances which seemed at first to have brought them grievous disappointment. This explains the presence of a conviction which did not develop slowly and calmly but showed itself with such intensity that it assumed the explosive form of a vision.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, H. C. Snape, Translator (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 85.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 70.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 74.

⁸⁸ Loc. cit.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 85-86. For a more extended presentation of this theory see Paul W. Schmiedel, "Resurrection

Evaluation. These hallucinations may have an appeal to some as a plausible explanation. Under proper stimulation people have had psychic experiences. But no sane person has permanent hallucinations and as soon as one is "conscious of these imaginary apparitions, one realizes their fictitious character and recognizes that they are wholly devoid of objective reality."⁹⁰ The apostles "were permanently and unalterably convinced that they had seen the risen Lord, conversed with Him, eaten with Him, handled his body."⁹¹ Such conviction does not rise from such sources. Goguel's concept above falls completely on at least two counts. The concept that Jesus had "gone to heaven," which might have been maintained for anyone, has small chance of "exploding" into a vision. However, even if such a vision were possible how can we assume the apostles could ever have presented their witness to it with such sufficient conviction as to win thousands into a dynamic triumphant belief that Jesus had uniquely and supremely conquered death?

Nor was the psychological climate such as would inspire such visions. Despair rather than anticipation marked

and Ascension Narratives," Encyclopaedia Biblica (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903), Vol. IV, pp. 4039-4087. Also Selby Vernon McCasland, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1932), pp. 219 gives an extended subjective vision treatment, using Peter as the key.

⁹⁰ Joseph L. Lilly, "The Appearances of the Risen Lord," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 4:25, January, 1942.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 26.

their mental attitudes. The difficulty with which they were convinced is a mark of nearly every resurrection account. They were not uncritical in their attitude but looked upon the early reports as "idle talk."⁹² The disciples insisted on proofs of the most concrete kind.⁹³ Not one, but many people were involved which multiplies the impossibility of this theory.

We observe further that on several occasions the disciples mistook Jesus for someone else. Were they looking for Jesus and in the mental attitude receptive to hallucination, the exact opposite would be true. They would see someone else and think it was Jesus. Thinking He was a gardener or a strange traveler, they examined and corrected their first impressions.⁹⁴ Further, if these were mere visions how can we account for the sudden cessation? It would be normal for such visions to continue for a long period of time.

We know from other recorded instances that these men knew how to distinguish a "vision" when they saw it. Peter had a vision on the housetop in Joppa and described it as such.⁹⁵ Paul likewise acknowledged that a vision came to

⁹² Luke 24:11.

⁹³ John 20:24 ff.

⁹⁴ Cf. F. F. Bruce, The Dawn of Christianity (London: The Paternoster Press, 1950), p. 69. Also cf. Arnold Lunn, The Third Day (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Book Shop, 1945), 90 ff.

⁹⁵ Acts 10:17.

him in the night urging him to cross over to Europe to evangelize.⁹⁶ The disciples did not present the Resurrection appearances as visions but as something far more real. Only thus can we account for their power to convince people that Jesus rose from the dead.

In the face of the "psychological impossibility of the Apostles' having suffered hallucinations thirty-six hours after the crucifixion of Jesus" most of the people who try to defend this view have to take their "critical scalpel and perform a literary appendectomy."⁹⁷ Without a single ancient text or testimony to support them they often completely rearrange references both to time and geography. Even after such drastic measures the whole theory falls on its evident failure to be a cause of sufficient strength and plausibility to account for the apostolic faith.⁹⁸ This theory is but another attempt "to dispense with the idea of the Resurrection altogether." ⁹⁹

Objective Vision Theory. This theory, in contrast to the one above, concedes that there was an outside force which produced the visions; a force at least supersensory and probably supernatural. Thus some would say that Jesus

⁹⁶ Acts 16:9. Cf. also Acts 12:9; II Corinthians 12:2.

⁹⁷ Lilly, op. cit., p. 30.

⁹⁸ For a good discussion on this see James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp. 205-234.

⁹⁹ Cf. Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 50. Italics in text.

rose as a "spiritual being" and impressed this vision upon His disciples. Kirsopp Lake is one of the chief exponents of this view. In common with many who advocate one or the other of the visional hypotheses, Lake takes the experience of the Apostle Paul as his norm. Does not St. Paul in the enumeration of the Resurrection appearances in First Corinthians fifteen conclude with, "and last of all, . . . he appeared to me also."? Without dwelling on Paul's comment, "as to the child untimely born,"¹⁰⁰ or the obvious purpose in establishing his apostolic position,¹⁰¹ he is then taken as the norm by which all others must be measured. Thus, "The Pauline form represents the earliest tradition, and it is that alone with which we have to deal."¹⁰² Or again,

It is quite plain that the disciples were all firmly convinced that the Lord had appeared to them, and no one more firmly than St. Paul; nor is there any reason to suppose that his experience was essentially different from that of the other disciples.¹⁰³

All references of the other witnesses to "seeing," "hearing," "touching" and the like must be a using of the

¹⁰⁰ Paul is here certainly making his experience the abnormal rather than the normal. The word used is more properly "abortion" and appears no where else in the N. T. Cf. Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, A Critical And Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), p. 339.

¹⁰¹ Cf. post p. 143.

¹⁰² Kirsopp Lake, The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), p. 265.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 265-266.

"language of our ordinary perception of the material to express the immaterial."¹⁰⁴ Dr. Lake contends that two conclusions must be drawn from the experience of St. Paul and made the determining factor for measuring all of the other appearances. One is that the experiences left no room for doubt in his mind, and the other that the appearances were those "of a spiritual being."¹⁰⁵ The use of the word "spiritual" is of key importance for Dr. Lake, and for that matter most who hold this view, as he tries to force the dilemma that it must be either a resuscitation of His dead body and hence exactly like it was before death, or else a completely detached "spiritual" body. There is no provision for the concept "of the transmutation" or transformation "of the physical body into the glorified and spiritual body."¹⁰⁶ Having established his conception of "spiritual," Dr. Lake then proceeds to use this concept as his "critical scissors" and remove all references in the Resurrection accounts to Jesus doing any act which would indicate Him as other than a disembodied spirit. All such references were put into the gospel accounts to fight Docetic heresies.¹⁰⁷

Then what is the nature of this "spiritual" Jesus who inspired the visions? Dr. Lake feels there was probably

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Morison, op. cit., p. 139. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Lake, op. cit., p. 265, for summary statement.

a real "presence" and not merely a subjective hallucination. He feels the experience of Paul which is his norm was too real to be merely the culmination of the impression made by the martyrdom of Stephen and other influences. "The extremely cumbrous and improbable nature of this suggestion is a serious objection to the purely subjective hypothesis."¹⁰⁸ He finally concludes that the "spiritual" person of Jesus who inspired the Resurrection visions must be placed in the same category with those who claim to contact the spirits of the dead and see their apparitions. The Resurrection of Jesus is not to be taken as an "isolated phenomena" but must be "considered in connection with others that belong to the same class."¹⁰⁹ We have so little information relative to this possibility of communication with the dead that the theory must necessarily be tentative until this phenomena is proved or disproved, Mr. Lake concludes.

There are many variations of Dr. Lake's position. In the nineteenth century Dr. Theodor Keim presented an "objective vision" theory in his six-volume life of Christ.¹¹⁰ The disciples received "God-given visions." The evidence that Jesus was alive consisted of a kind of "telegram from

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 267.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 275.

¹¹⁰ See Theodor Keim, The History of Jesus of Nazara, Freely Investigated in its Connection with the National Life of Israel, and Related in Detail (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883), Second Edition, Vol. VI, pp. 360 ff. Dr. Keim's criticism of subjective vision theory is convincing, pp. 352 ff.

heaven." Such a telegram was necessary in view of the seeming utter defeat and downfall at Calvary. "The evidence that he was alive was therefore given by his own impulsion and by the will of God. The Christianity of today owes to this evidence first its Lord and then its own existence:
 . . .¹¹¹

Another writer of this persuasion feels that the communication of Jesus with His disciples can best be explained on the same basis as mental telepathy.¹¹² Typical of many, a contemporary British scholar presents an indefinite idea of the nature of the object which inspired the vision. Asserting "Through vision the eye-witnesses reached the truth that Jesus was not held by the power of death" he then proceeds with: "The spiritual potency of Jesus, when death released Him from earthly limitations, was able to present Him in His glorified state to disciples whom He Himself had creatively prepared to receive the revelation of His triumph over death."¹¹³

Evaluations of Objective Vision Theories. It will be observed that the main distinguishing feature of the ob-

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 364-365.

¹¹² Burnett Hillman Streeter, "The Historic Christ," in B. H. Streeter, et. al, Foundations A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought: By Seven Oxford Men (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited), 1913.

¹¹³ P. G. S. Hopwood, The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church The Period Prior to the Influence of Paul. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 138.

jective vision theory from that of the subjective vision theory is that the former allows for the supernatural and an objective but "spiritual" Resurrection. They agree, however, in the conviction that the New Testament account is not the true account and that the body of Jesus never left the graveclothes and empty tomb behind. The "subjective" group interpret it all naturalistically and feel the body with no qualifications must have decayed in the tomb. The "objective" group grant the body remained dead but the "spirit" left it and inspired the Resurrection faith. What happened to the body? Many, even Renan who suggests a solution for nearly every other problem, are strangely silent. Streeter feels the empty tomb is historically true, but infers that the body must have been moved in some way consistent with "natural grounds."¹¹⁴ Lake takes an entirely different approach and says that the women probably mistook the tomb, and then tries to attack all of the other references to the tomb as late additions to the Resurrection stories.¹¹⁵

The really big objection to the "spiritual" Jesus, whose body continued to lie in some unknown grave, is that it just does not fit with the Resurrection accounts in the

¹¹⁴ Streeter, op. cit., p. 134.

¹¹⁵ James Orr's, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), gives a good deal of attention to exposing Dr. Lake's arbitrary method of extracting any element from the gospel record which does not fit his theory.

New Testament. So intermingled in every account of the Resurrection is the combined ideas of Jesus' corporeality and "His wonderful additions" that when you try to separate them you destroy the entire Resurrection account. Professor Lake's retreat to the occult to explain the Resurrection of Jesus is well answered by C. S. Lewis.

It must be clearly understood that if the Psychical Researchers succeeded in proving "survival" and showed that the Resurrection was an instance of it, they would not be supporting the Christian faith but refuting it. If that were all that had happened the original "gospel" would have been untrue.¹¹⁶

Our second criteria also disqualifies the elusive "telegram from heaven" concept, or for that matter any of the vision theories. How could we expect men to turn in great numbers to worship Jesus as God's Son, the wrench that it was to their monotheistic concept of God, on the basis of a ghost story? People are usually interested in such stories but you seldom find them the basis of repentance and faith! No, this is not what happened. It does far too much violence to the reported cause. It utterly fails in accounting for the dynamic, world-conquering faith of the apostolic band.

Evasion of the Problem. Strangely enough, the twentieth century approach to the problem of the "cause" of the disciple's belief has largely been to ignore it. This is in part at least the result of the organized and incessant

¹¹⁶ C. S. Lewis, Miracles A Preliminary Study (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 174.

attack upon the New Testament as a reliable source for the facts of Jesus' life. Adolf Harnack is usually credited with contributing more than any other to popularizing the "evasion" policy.¹¹⁷ He makes a distinction between what he calls the Easter message and the Easter faith.¹¹⁸ The Easter message is that of the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus after His departure from the grave. The Easter faith "is the conviction that the crucified one gained a victory over death; that God is just and powerful; that he who is the firstborn among many brethren still lives."¹¹⁹ Thus, due to the difficulty of proving any event as historically certain as well as to the embarrassing problems in the Resurrection narratives, let us abandon the message if we will, but hold on to the Resurrection faith. We must recognize that Jesus is the living Lord. This faith we can test out in modern life. This is all to which we need to hold.¹²⁰ This attempt to discard the Resurrection and preserve the belief in it, is neither scientific nor scriptural,¹²¹ but is the basic

¹¹⁷ Cf. Orr, op. cit., p. 23, or White, op. cit., pp. 33 ff.

¹¹⁸ Adolph Harnack, What is Christianity? Thomas B. Saunders, Translator (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), Second Edition, Revised, pp. 173 ff. Also cf. Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, Neil Buchanan, Translator, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1905), Vol. I, pp. 85 ff.

¹¹⁹ Harnack, What is Christianity? op. cit., p. 174.

¹²⁰ Cf. Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. I, pp. 86-87.

¹²¹ Cf. White, op. cit., pp. 33 ff, for a good criticism of Harnack's position.

premise by which many present day Christian leaders ignore or mutilate the Resurrection. All that is needed is the pragmatic test, "What does the Resurrection mean to us?" The usual answer is that Jesus is alive today. In speaking of the Resurrection accounts Edgar J. Goodspeed, a typical representative, says, "It was evidently Peter who first became conscious of the presence of Christ with him. Paul apparently thought of this experience as quite of the same kind as his own, on the Damascus road, on the occasion of his conversion. . . ."¹²²

After recounting the recorded appearances in the briefest and most colorless manner, Dr. Goodspeed concludes with the great commission and the promise to be with them always, even to the very close of the age.

That he is to be with them always, to the very end, shows that it is not as a physical presence that he has come back to them, but as a spiritual one. As Dr. Buttrick once put it, "Their memory of him quickened to a presence!" . . .

And this became and remained the fundamental conviction of the early church. It was the experience of Paul, and the key to the Gospel of John.

The more Pharisaic idea, that Jesus Resurrection was a physical reanimation, played a very brief role in the serious thinking of the ancient church. After forty days, Luke declares, he ascended into the sky, the place, as Luke supposed, of heaven. But it was John's thought of his return, as an inward spiritual presence, that guided and inspired the primitive church and armed it with a spiritual force that was indomitable. It was another John, the Christian prophet of Ephesus, who felt that presence in his prison on the Island of Patmos.¹²³

¹²² Edgar J. Goodspeed, A Life of Jesus (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 224.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 226-227.

Another modern biographer¹²⁴ of Jesus sees the "kernel" in a slightly different light. After pointing out what he considers contradictions of the account he says the unifying feature was the conviction that Jesus was not dead, centering around "one of the commonest of human experiences" that of life after death. The writer then confides his personal conviction and experience.

The dead whom we have loved do not leave us, but in some fashion continue here as faithful companions, sustaining and inspiring us. We find them again in familiar places, in the home, in the garden, on the village street; I believe we find them most often in occupations which once we shared with them. This constant resurrection of the dead is for me a simple fact, part of any human acquaintance with the daily mystery and beauty of life.¹²⁵

At this point let it only be said of the foregoing conceptions of the Resurrection that the realization that Jesus was alive and the joyful hope of immortality were convictions that swept the New Testament church and were an outcome of Jesus' distinctive triumph over death, but are not to be confused with the Resurrection itself. They are results, not the cause of the Resurrection faith.

Neo-orthodox theologians as represented by Karl Barth and Emil Brunner differ in degree rather than in kind when it comes to answering the question as to what inspired the Resurrection faith. They differ from the pronounced Liberals by emphasizing that Christ really rose from the

¹²⁴ John Erskine, The Human Life of Jesus (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1945), pp. 236-240.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 239.

dead, while the latter is usually satisfied to merely contend for "Immortality," "the Presence of Jesus," or some other idea related to the Resurrection. However, every effort to see behind the Resurrection faith is blocked by Karl Barth by his insistence that it is a 'non-historical' fact.¹²⁶ While the fact is well taken that here is something outside of history that can not be explained on the mere causal chain of ordinary human events, still he hardly seems justified in sweeping all historical evidence before his philosophical broom.

It is indeed somewhat strange to find in certain commentaries (we omit the names) the various "He appeared" of verses 5-7 I Corinthians 15 carefully numbered (from 1 to 5), registered, collated with the Synoptic and Johannine narratives, and the one criticised and corrected with the aid of the others, in order to ascertain clearly what might have been "original" there! Of all that the New Testament says we need not, in fact, believe a single word, if we do not want to, but we must at least realize that it speaks of appearances of the risen Christ; we must at least grasp and respect this idea, and realize that what pertains to this idea, even if we cannot make anything of it ourselves, is not to be counted, weighed and measured, as if it related to the conception of the historical Jesus, His closed or opened tomb, which, in fact, the "sources" dispute with all their power.¹²⁷

Emil Brunner stands on a surer historical foundation than his contemporary but still is found to say, "It is not the historical credibility of the Resurrection narratives

¹²⁶ Cf. Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, Edwyn C. Hoskyns, Translator (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 205 ff.

¹²⁷ Karl Barth, The Resurrection of the Dead, H. J. Stenning, Translator (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1933), p. 137.

which bears witness to Christ, but the self-testimony of Christ conveys to the believer the historical credibility of these narratives."¹²⁸ Thus in these men also we have a tendency to circumvent the problem at hand.¹²⁹

Still another variation of the modern tendency to ignore the basic causes of the Resurrection faith is found in the "demythologizing" group referred to under the theory of fraud. In common with the modern Liberal interpretation there is a general reversal of cause and effect. In this case, however, it is the record of the Resurrection rather than some concomitant which is reversed. Hence the record we have of the Resurrection is not a report of why the disciples believed but rather stories made up to justify this belief. If this were true we would still have to face the fact of where the belief originated that produced the stories. It is at this point that these men are most elusive. Rudolf Bultmann, a leader in this group, says the disciples were faced with a "decision" upon the death of Jesus.¹³⁰ As to the nature of this "decision" he does not say, but strongly hints that the disciples created the Resurrection faith and hence the old theory of fraud. How-

¹²⁸ Emil Brunner, The Mediator, A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith, Olive Wyon, Translator (London: Lutterworth Press, 1934), p. 575.

¹²⁹ Cf. similar criticism given by Ramsey, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

¹³⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Kendrick Grobel, Translator (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), Vol. I, p. 44.

ever, rather than openly commit himself to this position he slips out the back door of evasion prepared by Harnack some fifty years earlier. Thus he says, "How this act of decision took place in detail, how the Easter faith arose in individual disciples, has been obscured in the tradition by legend and is not of basic importance."¹³¹ This remark comes from a man who above all else assumes the role of being "scientific" in his approach to the scriptures. Were the book not so contemporary we would be tempted to use his own method of research, declaring this inconsistent with his general work and hence "without question" a "myth" interpolated by an overzealous lithographer!

For Alfred Loisy the word used to describe the birth of the belief in the Resurrection is "spontaneous."¹³² As one searches for the secret of this "spontaneity" one is forced into a circle of logic. It was the disciples' faith which in turn resulted in visions and these visions are the explanation of their faith! It amounts to a complete evasion as to how the disciples came to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. A very similar type of dilemma is found in the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia. Here Jesus' predictions of His death and Resurrection are credited with enabling His followers to survive the tragedy of His trial and death.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 45. Italics mine.

¹³² Alfred Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, L. P. Jacks, Translator (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948), p. 98.

It is at the same time asserted that the predictions of Jesus in this regard are probably not His but read back into His life by someone later! 133

Evaluation of Evasion. This calls for little comment. These are not answers to the cause of how the disciples came to believe Jesus rose from the dead but a complete reversal of cause and effect. The New Testament presents a movement from the specific to the general. The specific event was the Resurrection of Jesus, an event of such a nature that it convinced them of His utter uniqueness, His Divine Sonship. This in turn gave them clear insights and hope relative to Jesus as a living Presence, personal immortality, the Second Coming and other vital New Testament concepts. The above writers all move from the general to the specific. The disciples' longing for immortality, their feeling that Jesus is too good to die, or their feeling that He is alive and near them not only are understood to have created the Resurrection faith but a specific account with time, place, circumstance and personnel clearly brought forth. The power of the New Testament Church, the strong and immediate opposition it evoked, its unity of spirit and message all testify that the former is true. To those who would evade the real issue, the remarks of Charles Reade are most worth repeating, "To accept an inadequate explanation for an undeniable fact is credulity in one of its worst forms." 134

133 "Christianity", op. cit., Vol. III, p. 177.

134 Quoted in White, op. cit., p. 71.

IV. CONCLUSION: AN ADEQUATE CORRELATION OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

The Relation of the Biblical Cause to the Known Effect.

Every attempt to explain the Resurrection as something different from the Biblical account must make unjustified concession in at least three areas. First, regarding the character of the disciples, they must make light of their honesty, their credulity or their sanity. Secondly, they must misinterpret the force of the Resurrection faith. Hiroshima is made to be just another firecracker! In the third place they are forced to overlook the finality of Jesus' death and the accompanying despair and disillusionment of the disciples.

The Biblical account requires no such concession. The relationship between the reported cause and effect is both adequate and consistent. Even Strauss, who launched such an attack upon Christian belief that he was considered the "most trenchant and remorseless of the assailants even to the present hour" by one writing nearly a century later,¹³⁵ has to concede this harmonious relationship.

The origin of that faith in the disciples is fully accounted for if we look upon the resurrection of Jesus as the Evangelists describe it, as an external miraculous occurrence: i.e. if we suppose that Jesus really died, was recalled to life by God by an act of his omnipotence, or rather transported by him into a new and higher kind of existence, in which he could indeed exercise his influence in a

¹³⁵ Orr, op. cit., p. 11.

material and perceptible manner on his followers on earth, but, being no longer subject to death, was soon taken up into heaven into the immediate neighborhood of God.¹³⁶

The reasons given in the New Testament for the apostles' belief explains all the known aspects, including their victory out of despair and the permanent vitality of their faith. A dynamic event brought forth dynamic results. Convincing evidence resulted in utter conviction. The empty tomb, the empty graveclothes, the joyful testimony of obviously sincere men witnessing to the undescribable, proved sufficiently plausible and convincing to turn thousands to worship a crucified Jew as the Son of God and to abandon the deep-rooted Sabbath for the new "Lord's Day" of the Resurrected Jesus. The Risen Lord so convinced these men that His triumph was real, heaven was real, immortality was real, that they welcomed the opportunity to suffer for His Name in this world, to be known as "fools for Christ's sake," to preach righteousness and judgment to their persecutors,¹³⁷ to die that they might be with Him.¹³⁸ This chain of cause and effect runs unbroken from the Easter dawn, the empty tomb, the cry "He is risen," the stunned reaction, the real appearances, the gracious instruction, the commission to "Go"--to "Preach the Gospel," the changed lives, the empowered disciples, the bitter op-

¹³⁶ Strauss, New Life of Christ, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 399.

¹³⁷ Acts 5:29-32; 24:24-25.

¹³⁸ Philippians 1:23.

position, the flaming evangel, the triumphant martyrs, the victorious Church! Here is sufficient cause for both the men and the Church. Christ conquered death.

Real Reasons for Rejecting. Is it a real lack of evidence or a predisposition to disbelieve that has produced such an array of insufficient "explanations" and "evasions" of the Resurrection? The Apostle Paul saw a predisposition to disbelief in King Agrippa and cried out, "And concerning this hope I am accused, O King! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?"¹³⁹ Jesus attributed it to an inadequate knowledge both of God's revelation and His power. To the Sadducees who dismissed the possibility of a Resurrection on the basis of their presuppositions, he said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures [general knowledge], nor the power of God [experiential knowledge]."¹⁴⁰

More than any other factor, the naturalistic assumptions of the modern man makes it necessary to rely on some other cause and explanation for the Resurrection faith. "It must be demonstrated in terms of some contemporary phenomena, even if it drives one to the occult," such is the modern mentality. However that is the very issue. The Resurrection defies being classified in this way. So far as ordinary history is concerned it is a "first cause," an uncaused fact with shattering results. "It was the shattering of history

¹³⁹ Acts 26:7-8.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew 22:29.

by a creative act of God Almighty."¹⁴¹ The person whose concept of life and the universe rules out a personal God will be forced to limp along with such helpless explanations as have been devised. Let such a person at least open his shell long enough to for a moment "doubt his doubts." Perchance the New Testament is true! God has spoken! A rent has been made in eternity! Righteousness and judgment are the ultimate facts of life! Defiantly refusing to consider the facts, may we not someday hear the words already once spoken on this earth, "And these are they that witness of me; and ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life."¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ James S. Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 106.

¹⁴² John 5:39-40.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM PRESENTED BY A STUDY OF THE RECORDED EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO JESUS' DEATH, REPORT OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND HIS APPEARANCES

I. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In the previous chapters we examined the apostles and other first generation Christians as believers. In this chapter we wish to look carefully at the reported witnesses of the Resurrection. In Chapter three we were concerned with the origin of the Resurrection faith. We observed that the many proffered explanations failed desperately in one or more aspects to provide a cause in keeping with the nature and strength of the given and acknowledged effect. Only the explanation given in the New Testament, the supernatural Resurrection of Jesus, was seen to be adequate. As mentioned in Chapter three, however, one line of attack against the reality of Jesus' Resurrection has been to present the accounts of those who saw Jesus alive, not as valid testimonies of something they saw and heard, but rather stories which were created to justify a faith which already existed. These stories are then considered as fictions, either created in total by individuals and hence direct forgeries, or created by the subtle process of enlargement as they were handed from individual to individual.

Some of the basic problems of such an assumption have already been referred to. If these stories are the result of a faith in the Resurrection of Jesus and hence made up to justify it rather than an account of the events out of which the faith in the Resurrection grew, we are still faced with a tremendous enigma as to how the initial faith originated. Also, such "myths" must have ample time to develop. It is popular, therefore, for men of this persuasion to deny that any of the gospel writers were first-hand witnesses, and to push the date of the composition of the gospels to as late a date as possible. However, archaeology and the discovery of ancient manuscripts keep pushing the dates farther back into the first century and confirm the documents as genuine in such things as can be checked, such as references to Geography and History.¹ These men are further faced with the embarrassing problem that we find the faith in the Resurrection in full strength in what is generally thought to be the earliest documents. For example, by the time you have proceeded ten verses in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, he has not only mentioned Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, but has referred repeatedly to Him as Lord and Christ, called Him God's Son and spoken of His expected Second Coming! All of these latter ideas, as pointed out previously, are closely associated with and issue out of

¹ Cf. the discussion on Luke in W. M. Ramsay, The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920), Fourth Ed., pp. 222 ff.

the Resurrection. Also it is First Corinthians, a relatively early epistle, and almost universally acknowledged as genuine, that gives a definite list of Resurrection appearances which coincide with at least four of those given in the gospels. Thus, both the faith and the accounts existed at that early date, giving an inadequate time for "myths" to develop.

The "myth" theory must brand as falsehoods the claims of our two most complete accounts of the Resurrection witnesses. The Gospel of John claims to have been written by an eye-witness.² Luke claims to have gotten his information from eye-witnesses and to have accurately checked the material included in his book.³ Also, the author of the Book of Acts, whom we take to be the same one as that of Luke,⁴ by his famous "we" sections indicates that he was a companion of Saint Paul and that on at least one occasion he was in Jerusalem consulting with "James and all the elders."⁵ Add to this the moral obligation that would have been upon the original apostles to correct such "myths" that would have come to their attention during their lifetime. In fact the last chapter of the Gospel of John seems to have been given as a footnote to the gospel account, which was rounded out at the end of Chapter twenty, for the express purpose of

² John 19:35; 21:24.

³ Luke 1:2.

⁴ Supra, pp. 6-7.

⁵ Acts 21:18.

quelling a false report that was going around about the death of the "disciple whom Jesus loved." The author, who claims to be the disciple so designated, makes a very careful and minute statement to clarify this problem.⁶ Can we imagine that he would have been any less zealous about correcting exaggerations and misstatements about the Resurrection? If we accept the testimony of Irenaeus (a student of Polycarp who was in turn the Apostle John's disciple), that John lived to be an old man in Ephesus, we have such a guardian of the truth with us until the beginning of the second century.⁷

All of these facts make the general assumptions of the "demythologizing" school of interpreters insecure, to say the least.⁸ The present chapter attempts to consider the problem from an entirely different aspect. If these accounts are mere fictions the general psychological marks should betray them; or at the same time if these are reports of real events, we should be able to sense some of the elements of reality. The writer realizes that what is to follow is but a segment of the evidences for the Resurrection, but feels it is a segment that needs to be considered. It is also acknowledged that piecemeal attacks have been made

⁶ John 21:18-23.

⁷ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 11. 22. 5., in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Editors, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1896), Vol. I, p. 392.

⁸ For a treatment of some of the philosophical assumptions and weaknesses of the above school, cf. Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), pp. 114-118.

upon the narratives from this very point of view. However, we want to survey the entire emotional structure in the light of which individual parts must be made to fit. It is further conceded that there is no known force to convince one utterly predispositioned to disbelieve. This is nowhere more forcefully illustrated than in the debate about the Gospel of Luke. For years it was charged to have been a mere fiction and legend, and supposed historical inconsistencies were cited as the proof. When the very purported historical allusions were proven to be dramatically accurate, certain "scholars" replied that Luke knew the history and custom and hence built his legend about it to make it appear convincing! Sir William Ramsay in commenting on this incident says, "There is no way of satisfying those people who have made up their minds."⁹ However, let the following evidence be considered for what it is worth.

II. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE GENUINENESS OF THE RESURRECTION WITNESSES

Measured by the Standards of Religious Experience. It is admittedly not a simple matter to establish standards by which to measure the emotional reactions of the Resurrection witnesses, since such standards are not often presented. While seeing and hearing the Resurrected Jesus was more than is generally thought to be included in a common religious

⁹ Ramsay, op. cit., pp. 272-273.

experience, as for example the call of Moses, they include many of the same elements. Rev. Albert Clarke Wyckoff, for many years professor of Psychology of Religion and related subjects at The Biblical Seminary in New York, gave the following five elements as being involved in every major religious experience.

1. Awe
2. Fascination
3. Creature feeling
4. Awareness of a Wholly Other, or the assurance of contact with another personality.
5. Power (energy)¹⁰

However, in every case, the nature of the subject, the nature of the object, and the nature of the relationship established between them influenced the direction, force and nature of the above elements. As we use the above criteria, its import and meaning will become more clear.

Measured by the Laws of Establishing Evidence. Approaching the entire matter from another angle, we observe some of the criteria referred to by Dr. D. L. Trueblood in his book entitled, The Logic of Belief.¹¹ Dr. Trueblood makes the following important observation.

¹⁰ Taken from class notes by the writer when a student of Dr. Wyckoff in 1944.

¹¹ David Elton Trueblood, The Logic of Belief, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), 327 pp.

The chief way in which we approach certainty as a limit is by the discovery of converging lines of evidence. Any single piece of evidence must be respected, but the chance of avoiding error is vastly increased if there is support from independent sources. The difference between one line of evidence and two or three, pointing in the same direction, is tremendous. This is the point of Butler's famous aphorism, "For probable proofs, by being added, not only increase the evidence but multiply it."¹²

It will be observed that this rule applies, whether in examining the evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus, or in putting a man on trial for a crime. While we have many times reemphasized that we are following only a few of the many lines of proof for the Resurrection of Jesus, still we acknowledge the validity of the above criteria for establishing the line we are pursuing.

His three "positive arguments for realism," can be brought to bear in the present discussion without doing violence to his thought. His first argument is that there is a difference between "perceptual and nonperceptual experience." The former have about them "a strength, a vividness, a permanence, and a commanding quality which is not involved in the experience which we recognize as imaginative or hallucinatory."¹³ If that is true in experience, it should be also true to a degree in the report of that experience. The second argument is that we get the impression of reality by

¹² Ibid., p. 41. Italics his. The quotation from Butler is Joseph Butler, The Analogy of Religion, Part II, Chapter VII.

¹³ Ibid., p. 60.

observing evidence of continuity even when this continuity is not observed in fact. Thus if a fire is left burning in the house, we see upon returning that the fuel is partially burned, although we do not see the whole process. As we study the emotions of the Resurrection witnesses, while not told of all the process, can observe "planes" of experience in which the element of progress can be observed. Dr. Trueblood's third argument is still more pertinent. In observing reality "there is fundamental agreement between many observers in what is experienced." While there may be some difference within this agreement, the amount of agreement is "hard to explain by the miracle of coincidence."¹⁴ If this rule applies to reality in general it may very well apply to reality in a particular sense when applied to the witnesses of the Resurrection.

Another pertinent insight which can be brought to bear in the present study is Dr. Trueblood's comment about the "authority of the amateur." "This unique aspect appears in the paradox that, so far as religion is concerned, the expert is the amateur."¹⁵ By this he means that the non-professional observer is actually a more dependable witness than the professional. In religious matters there is something about professionalism that "dulls the sensitive spirit." The application of this will be noted later.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 79. Italics his.

Measured by the Laws of Fact and Fiction. It is possible to approach our criteria from still another angle. Certain lines of affinity run between realistic fiction and good reporting. Literary frauds have been known to pass for real stories. Only recently a Canadian soldier of World War II told an impressive story of being a British agent in occupied France, having his story condensed in a leading magazine before he was discovered.¹⁶ Fiction must have certain characteristics in order to appear realistic. It must be specific enough to indicate the basic conditions of time, place, and situation. In characterization, the people presented must be revealed in word and action rather than merely set forth with labels. Further, the characters must be shown in total, that is, their weaknesses as well as their strength. If the writer is trying to convey a point of teaching, he must be able to do so without being obtrusive.

While all of these and more are necessary for realism in fiction, the marks of reality often include items that would not be good fiction. "Loose ends and unsolved conundrums are intolerable in a novel,"¹⁷ but may be the marks of reality in a true account. For example, Arnold Lunn has pointed out that a novelist could never have refrained from

¹⁶ See Book Section of Reader's Digest, November, 1953. For the exposure see "The Story of an Extraordinary Hoax" in Reader's Digest, January 1954.

¹⁷ Arnold Lunn, The Third Day (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Book Shop, 1945), p. 49. Also for the entire section above cf. Glenville Kleiser, Training for Authorship (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1925), pp. 354-355.

telling what words Jesus wrote in the sand as He challenged the accusers of the woman taken in adultery.¹⁸ However, any such attempt would have been "infinitely less telling than the silence of St. John" who very easily might have been an eye witness, prevented by the crowd or some other reason from seeing the actual words.¹⁹ A fiction writer would be most unlikely to have inserted the story of the "certain young man" in Mark 14, who ran off at the arrest of Jesus leaving his coat in the hands of his pursuers. Clues in the Resurrection accounts should assist in helping us measure its factual nature.

III. THE FACTS INVESTIGATED

The Post-Crucifixion Condition. Little is left to the imagination concerning the events of Good Friday. More than any other day of Jesus' life we have the tragic details paraded before our eyes. The emotional picture is graphic and gripping. The callous soldiers inserting an element of jest with their grim duty, Pilate revealing his talent for irony by insisting that "The King of the Jews" stand as Jesus' inscription, the unholy delight and satisfaction of the revengeful Pharisees and chief priests, the cowed disciples concerning the presence of whom a strange silence lingers, the weeping women, all bear the marks of vivid

¹⁸ John 8:1-11.

¹⁹ Lunn, op. cit., p. 50.

realism.

The silence of the Jewish Sabbath hangs over Saturday, broken so far as the record is concerned only by a stunned sob. Certain of the women are reported to have observed carefully where Jesus was laid as the sun began to sink on Friday evening. We are told by Luke that they rested on the Sabbath "according to the commandment."²⁰ The segment at the end of Mark describes "them that had been with him" as mourning and weeping in the early hours of Sunday before the news of the Resurrection.²¹

Thus despair marked the condition of the followers of Jesus after the crucifixion. This is strongly supported by the stunned and disbelieving attitude which marked the first reaction to the Resurrection, of which more will be said later.

It is the one thing most evident from the fragmentary accounts that have come down to us, that nowhere on the wide earth that day could be found a more hopeless, desponding group of people than the disciples of Jesus who lay vanquished and dead in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The spring of their life is broken. There is nothing to do, nothing to look forward to. The men are gloomily wondering if they must go back to their fishing. The sobbing women are preparing spices to embalm the dead body. Jesus is dead. The end of all things is come.²²

A devotional writer has observed the tense of the verb in the report of the two followers of Jesus, who had heard of

²⁰ Luke 23:56.

²¹ Mark 16:10.

²² J. Patterson-Smyth, A People's Life of Christ (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), pp. 475-476.

the empty tomb but still asserted, "But we hoped it was he who should redeem Israel."²³ For devotional purposes it may be satisfactory to interpret this sigh of despair and shattered hopes as an indication of weakness of faith, but it reflects a mark of realism and feeling which we confirm by a moment's reflection as the natural reaction of the disciples.²⁴ For men trained in the Jewish idea that suffering was a mark of God's wrath, there must have been a simultaneous death of their hopes as the final drops of life flowed from the pierced body of Jesus. Men who had seen in Jesus' power a sure sign of His Messiahship, now saw Him in seemingly utter weakness when the real crisis had arrived. "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross."²⁵ "He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him."²⁶ These and the other taunting words must have reinforced their bitter despair. In one sudden stroke, He in whom they "had hoped" was gone. Even Strauss is willing to acknowledge that "their hopelessness which is both unani- mously attested by the narratives, and is in perfect ac- cordance with the nature of the case," was of sufficient

²³ Luke 24:21. Note also the expression, "They stood still, looking sad" in verse 18.

²⁴ The devotional discussion referred to can be found in Mrs. Charles E. Cowman, Streams in the Desert (Los Angeles: The Oriental Missionary Society, 1932), Twelfth Ed., p. 73.

²⁵ Matthew 27:40.

²⁶ Matthew 27:42.

consequence to raise the testimony of the disciples to the Resurrection to that of "impartial" witnesses.²⁷

The second outstanding emotional reaction of the disciples at the time of Jesus death was that of fear. "Then all the disciples left him and fled."²⁸ Thus in the Garden of Gethsemane they were first overtaken by fear and the events that followed must have increased their alarm relative to their personal safety. Only John is specifically mentioned as being at the cross,²⁹ although Peter testifies in his Epistle as being a "witness of the sufferings of Christ."³⁰ Silence reigns relative to the others until we find them in Jerusalem on Sunday evening.³¹ At that time the doors were shut "for fear of the Jews." Incidental though the reference is, it reveals what must surely have been the psychological atmosphere. It would not be very comforting to be in tense, emotion-shaken Jerusalem, members of a little band whose leader had just been condemned and executed--a traitor so far as the Roman government was concerned, and as a blasphemer in the eyes of the fanatic Jews. Might they

²⁷ David Friedrich Strauss, The Life of Jesus, Marian Evans, Translator (New York: Calvin Blanchard, 1856), Vol. II, p. 846.

²⁸ Matthew 26:56.

²⁹ John 19:26-27.

³⁰ I Peter 5:1.

³¹ John 20:19 ff. For a good discussion of the disciples' situation see Frank Morison, Who Moved the Stone? (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1930), pp. 79-87.

not well share His fate?

Fear with a different cause is the logical explanation of another interesting phenomenon associated with the Saturday following Jesus' death. The story of the placing of the guard at the tomb of Jesus has caused not a few critics to scoff at the incident as unrealistic in that the enemies of Jesus seemed to evidence more faith in His Resurrection than did His friends.³² Believers in the Resurrection likewise have not failed to express surprise at this turn of things.³³ It is often pointed out that Jesus had prepared His disciples for just such an event while the enemies would have had no opportunity to know.

First let us consider the enemies. As we examine the trial and crucifixion of Jesus we find a strange recurrence of the reference to the "three days." At least three charges were brought against Jesus. The one that finally convinced Pilate to act was that He stirred up the people against Caesar. This apparently made relatively little difference to the Jews excepting as a means of getting His execution. The one that weighed most heavily with them was His acknowledgment that He was the Son of God, a confession which the high

³² See Kirsopp Lake, The Historical Evidences for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), p. 179. Also Strauss, Life of Christ, op. cit., pp. 805 ff.

³³ Cf. D. L. Moody in Alexander MacLaren, et. al., The Resurrection (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1896), p. 31. Also C. C. Dobson, The Empty Tomb and The Risen Lord (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd.), p. 49.

priest forced Him with an oath to make.³⁴ However, before these were introduced witnesses were brought in who said that Jesus had claimed to be able to destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days. Jesus no doubt in His later ministry made the same statement that He made in the temple at Jerusalem during His early ministry, which the disciples later knew to refer to His Resurrection.³⁵ The report of these false witnesses with the reference to the three days is found in both Matthew and Mark.³⁶ Perhaps due to the contradictory nature of the evidence, or maybe because they comprehended that He had a deeper meaning, this charge was not pushed. However, at the cross we find the mocking words, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself!"³⁷ The idea of the three days was obviously sticking in their minds. We are therefore not surprised to hear them ask Pilate for permission to guard the tomb. "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again."³⁸ The unusual events surrounding the crucifixion including the darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the veil of the temple, may have

³⁴ Matthew 26:63-64.

³⁵ John 2:19-22.

³⁶ Matthew 26:61 and Mark 14:58. For a good discussion of this entire event see Morison, op. cit., pp. 18-24. Also James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp. 99-101.

³⁷ Matthew 27:40 and Mark 15:29.

³⁸ Matthew 27:63.

added considerable force to the memory of His strange prediction.

Now we turn to the disciples. W. W. White commenting on this strange circumstance remarks,

These enemies remembered the statement that Jesus had made about rising from the dead after three days. Strange that the disciples had forgotten? Yes and no. There is the profoundest psychology here. Real life presents the most unexpected contraries. . . . How can we believe this story to be a fabrication? Who would weave out of imagination such a combination of ideas?³⁹

Psychologically, are not the actions of both the enemies and friends of Jesus explainable on the same general principle. Both were being dominated by their fears. The enemies had with great satisfaction guided events so as to dispose of Jesus, yet His wonderful person, His confident words,⁴⁰ along with the unusual events accompanying His death took the keen edge off that satisfaction and planted a disturbing doubt. This doubt and fear became the motive spring of the action that followed. In the case of the disciples the same was true from the opposite point of view. They had believed Jesus was the Messiah with a heavy concentration of "earthly Kingship" built into the concept.⁴¹ Their own personal ambitions were tied in enough that they were arguing about who would be greatest just a few hours

³⁹ Wilbert W. White, The Resurrection Body "According to the Scriptures" (Albany, N. Y.: Frank H. Ivory and Co., 1923), p. 58.

⁴⁰ Cf. Matthew 26:64, which certainly intimates that death would not end His work.

⁴¹ Cf. Luke 24:21 and Acts 1:6.

before His arrest.⁴² The disciples had been repulsed when Jesus introduced the thought of His coming passion.⁴³ It is not surprising that His added reference to a Resurrection was incomprehensible. At least such a statement seemed unconvincing when they looked upon His blood-stained lifeless corpse, their ears still ringing with the triumphant challenges of the embittered enemies. Whatever may have been their submerged hopes, they were ruled by their fears. Former heights of promise and love only made the abyss more dark. Since "they could not really accept the necessity of his suffering," they "were the less ready to look forward to his resurrection."⁴⁴ The disciples' fears were their masters following the crucifixion as they "wept and mourned." The complete candor of the Evangelists in confessing the abandonment of hope and faith and, what has been termed by some, their "stupidity," helps us to accept their testimony on this point.⁴⁵

Seven "Photographic" Stories. In the ten or more appearances of Jesus (depending upon your identification of certain accounts) there are seven stories that are given in

⁴² Luke 22:24 ff.

⁴³ Matthew 16:21-28, Mark:9:31-32; Luke 9:22-27.

⁴⁴ J. N. Sanders, The Foundation of the Christian Faith (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), p. 92. Cf. also Delbert R. Rose, "The Last Error," The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, March, 1947, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Cf. Sanders, loc. cit.

rather minute detail. Before summarizing their total emotional content, a review of them will assist in keeping the proper perspective. In discussing them we will roughly follow the chronological sequence.

(1) The First Believer. A woman running through the narrow city streets early on the Sunday morning following the Crucifixion was perhaps the first indication to the citizens of Jerusalem that something unusual had taken place among the little group of followers of the recently executed religious leader. A calling at a door, a hushed but excited exchange of words, and two out-door men from the province of Galilee burst out into the street and run purposefully in the direction from which the woman has come, out the city gates and toward the hill where the recent execution has taken place. The slower of these two men is identified as Peter, the disciple of Jesus, and the second is identified as "the other disciple whom Jesus loved,"⁴⁶ the writer of the account,⁴⁷ historically believed to be the disciple John. The motive of the race to the tomb is the report that the stone had been moved from the tomb and Jesus' body no doubt taken away.

From this point on the story centers on the empty graveclothes inside the tomb. Coming to the grave, the "other disciple" stooping down and looking in "seeth" the linen cloths lying. Peter, who came later, entered, "and

⁴⁶ John 20:2. This entire account is found in John 20:1-10 and a mention of it in Luke 24:12.

⁴⁷ Cf. John 21:20 and 24.

he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." Finally the other disciple entered and studying the grave-clothes, "saw and believed." Several writers have pointed out the three uses of verbs for "see" in the Greek.⁴⁸ The first is the common word for see or βλένει in the Greek. The second often has the meaning of "to gaze upon inquiringly--to look with eyes wide with intent and great desire to understand,"⁴⁹ θεωρεῖν, while the third word is εἶδε and means "perceived, saw through, understood." Thus we have the "beloved disciple" seeing through the evidence of the tomb and the graveclothes and "believing." This account breathes with simple realism. The combination of detail and restraint, action and reaction, even the consistency with the personalities of the participants as revealed in other places, make it sound like an eye-witness report. As fact, it is convincing. As a "myth" created as an apologetic, it is evasive about what it is trying to divulge. The evidence is strongly in favor of the former.⁵⁰

As to what John or "the beloved disciple" "believed" after the survey of the tomb, the entire context that follows leaves no doubt but that it was the supernatural departure of the body of Jesus. Not that this was all the evidence he

⁴⁸ Dobson, op. cit., pp. 118-126, or White, op. cit., pp. 52-55.

⁴⁹ White, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁰ Cf. Orr, op. cit., p. 151.

ever had of Jesus' Resurrection, but this was convincing enough to inspire belief. Afterwards he witnesses to seeing the Risen Lord. It is significant that in every gospel, allusion is made to important evidence being in the tomb. Luke tells of Peter's examination of the graveclothes and later of the report of the women that "they found not his body."⁵¹ In Matthew and Mark we have very similar accounts of the angels inviting the women to look at the place where Jesus' body had lain.⁵² We observe here the law of the converging lines of evidence mentioned in our discussion of criteria for evaluating genuineness.⁵³

(2) The First Witness. Admittedly the various accounts about the experiences and reports of Mary Magdalene and the other women are not always easy to untangle in detail. A minimum of five women are involved, with the possibility of more.⁵⁴ The names of four of these are clearly given in the combined accounts. However, one name is found in every document including both parts of Mark. This witness is Mary Magdalene.. Since we find a specific story of her alone in the Gospel of John⁵⁵ and we are informed that

⁵¹ Luke 24:12, 22.

⁵² Matthew 28:6, Mark 16:6.

⁵³ For a fascinating evaluation of what this evidence was, including the rolled or "twirled" napkin, the reader is referred to the valuable discussion in White, op. cit., p. 56, or Dobson, op. cit., pp. 124-126.

⁵⁴ Luke mentions Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the other women.

⁵⁵ John 20:11-18.

she was the first witness of Jesus after He arose from the dead in the last section of Mark,⁵⁶ we proceed to briefly examine her story. So far as Mary was concerned there seems to have been three distinct experiences at the tomb. On very early arrival she, and perhaps a companion,⁵⁷ observed the stone rolled away. The strong inference is that she did not examine the inside of the tomb in which case she would have seen the graveclothes, at least, but rather made the hasty decision that someone had rifled the tomb and taken the body of Jesus. She ran to notify the disciples as described above. On returning she saw two angels in the tomb referred to in Luke as "two men . . . in dazzling apparel."⁵⁸ The nature of her conversation with the angels reported in John would seem to indicate that for the moment she did not recognize them as such but was too taken up with grief. The tears, the grief, and the concern about where the body of Jesus has disappeared, are the outstanding marks of the experience of Mary.⁵⁹ Now comes the high point of Mary's experience as reported in John. She moves away from the tomb

⁵⁶ Mark 16:9.

⁵⁷ While John mentions only Mary, in reporting to the disciples she says, "We know not where they have laid him." John 20:2.

⁵⁸ Luke 24:4. Matthew reports one angel (28:1-7).

⁵⁹ Cf. Henry Barclay Swete, The Appearances of our Lord After the Passion (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1915), pp. 6-8, or Brooke Foss Westcott, The Revelation of the Risen Lord (London: Macmillan and Co., 1887), Fourth Ed., pp. 20-24.

and sees Jesus approaching but does not recognize Him. He addresses her with the same question that was put forth by the angels, "Why weepest thou?" and then adds, "Whom seekest thou?" Mary's preoccupation with the problem of Jesus' disappearance remains in the foreground. Without identifying the object of her search (hardly a strange phenomena under such condition of stress)⁶⁰ she replies, "Sir, if thou has borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." It is then that Jesus spoke her name, "Mary," and instantly she recognized that her questioner was Jesus Himself. The following cry, "Rabboni," was accompanied by an act of worship as she grasped His feet. Jesus told her not to cling to Him but go to the disciples with a message of His Resurrection and impending return to the Father.⁶¹

(3) The reports of the women. Although some would strongly contend for the fact that there was only one group of women that went to the tomb, of which Mary Magdalene was leader,⁶² the more probable view is that in our various

⁶⁰ Brooke Foss Westcott in The Gospel According to St. John (London: John Murray, 1908), Vol. II, p. 344, says concerning this point, "The trait is one of those direct reflections of life which mark St. John's Gospel."

⁶¹ Westcott in Ibid., p. 345, tells us that the exact form of the Greek implies that Mary was already clinging to Jesus when He spoke. This would overcome an apparent contrast in attitude with Matthew 28:9-10 and make the two events more likely the same.

⁶² Cf. Edward A. Mangan, "The Women at the Tomb," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 7:2, April, 1945, pp. 191-200.

accounts we have the story told from several points of view with slight variation in both time and personnel. It is the contention of many that the women, of whom there were at least five, did not all stay in the same house on the previous night. Hence no doubt there would be an agreement to meet at an early hour, perhaps at the tomb, to offer a final act of devotion to their departed Lord. We are further faced with the fact that the disciples could very well have been stationed in different places within the city or even some in Bethany at the hospitable friends of Jesus. We thus have several reports, perhaps made to several groups of the disciples. We have first of all the report of Mary Magdalene to Peter and the "other disciple" which we have already considered. We have another report of women who had been to the tomb, found not the body of Jesus, but reported "a vision of angels, who said that he was alive."⁶³ We also have the report of Mary Magdalene that she had seen Jesus alive.⁶⁴ When we realize that not only were there probably distinct groups but a degree of movement from one group to another, as the

⁶³ Luke 24:23. Gf. also Luke 24:1-11.

⁶⁴ Mark 16:10-11, also John 20:18. First impression upon reading Luke's account is that Mary Magdalene with the women reported the angel's appearance but no mention is made of His personal appearance to Mary. Careful study of Luke 24:1-12 indicates a general and inclusive reference to personnel and to some degree time. The women are referred to as "they" with "the women who had come with him out of Galilee" as antecedent. They reported "to the eleven, and to all the rest" which was obviously not done at one setting. Even in verse ten where Mary Magdalene is mentioned with two others by name, we have the phrase "and the other women" making the group general and inclusive.

case of Mary Magdalene who ran to tell Peter and John and later returned to the tomb, perhaps to reunite with other women, we would hardly expect all evidence to fit too obviously. As indicated previously there is variation in the reports relative to the number and position of the angels. We recognize immediately that if there were more than one group of women only a slight change of time and place would allow for a new situation. The reactions also are different. Mark leaves us with the impression in the end of his first resurrection section that they told no one because of their fear.⁶⁵ In Matthew "they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.

There are many things which bind the accounts together, however. The presence of the angels and their message to the disciples is the key so far as the groups of women are concerned. In John we are hardly aware of the group of women, but the synoptic narratives agree that the women while at the tomb were perplexed and frightened by the presence of angels who announced that the Lord had risen and invited them to see where He lay. "He is not here. He is risen," vibrates like an electric charge through all three accounts. There was no confusion about this part of the message!

⁶⁵ The fact that these are the last words of an abrupt ending makes it doubtful as to whether this was intended to indicate a condition of long duration. It is very possible that the original goes on to qualify the phrase, "they said nothing to anyone." Morison, op. cit., p. 184-185, shows a parallel sentence in Mark 1:44, which if cut would convey a meaning directly opposite to its true meaning.

What are we to make of all this? Bear in mind the situation. Grief and no doubt a certain uncanny feeling must have been the predominant emotions of the women as they approached the tomb in the early hours of Sunday morning. They cautiously approach the empty tomb and look in. It shows remarkable composure that they were able to get any message from two beings in the tomb! Are we surprised if some spoke of men "in dazzling apparel" and others of either one or two angels? "If for instance, Joanna saw two angels, and Mary, in the language of the law courts, was only prepared to swear to the presence of one angel, there would be no necessary contradiction between the two accounts."⁶⁶ Is absolute agreement in minor detail the basis upon which courts of law determine the truth in most events? "The usual characteristics of human testimony is substantial truth under circumstantial variety. That is what the daily experience of courts of justice teaches us."⁶⁷ Being without the benefit of further examination of the witnesses, we have to confess that the Evangelists have done a remarkable service in putting into so condensed a space the kernel of the testimony of five or more excited witnesses who suddenly came into contact with the supernatural. In a situation involving such experiences

For a discussion of the groups of women see Gilbert West, Observation on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Boston: James Loring, 1834), p. 16.

⁶⁶ Lunn, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 86, quoting "Paley" who is not further identified.

by a group of people and then reporting to another large group of people, the minor differences tend to accentuate rather than detract from the veracity of the accounts. "If the stories which the women told all agreed in the minutest detail we should have to postulate a second miracle to account for so remarkable a concurrence."⁶⁸ We must bear in mind that the report of the women is only a small part of the evidence and that their testimony was later confirmed by many witnesses of the Risen Christ Himself under varying circumstances and in various places. Within a few hours of the cry, "He is risen," Jesus was saying "Peace be unto you," to the still uncertain and frightened disciples.

(4) The two enroute to Emmaus. Luke with great skill and beautiful simplicity brings us a story which disarms even those who are most critical of the Resurrection stories in general.⁶⁹ Aside from an allusion to this incident in the fragment of Mark,⁷⁰ we are solely dependent upon Luke for our information. Two followers of Jesus, not of the intimate twelve,⁷¹ and probably natives of Judaea rather than Galilee,⁷² left Jerusalem on Sunday afternoon for a village

⁶⁸ Lunn, op. cit., p. 87.

⁶⁹ Cf. P. Gardner-Smith, The Narratives of the Resurrection, A Critical Study (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1926), p. 66.

⁷⁰ Mark 16:12-13.

⁷¹ Cf. Luke 24:18 and 33.

⁷² Cf. Henry Latham, The Risen Master (Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co., 1910), pp. 101-103.

called Emmaus about seven miles away. They had been in contact with at least some of the disciples, knew that the tomb was empty and had heard the report of the women concerning "a vision of angels who said that he was alive."⁷³ However, disbelief and questioning are the words used to describe their frame of mind.⁷⁴ As they together discussed the events of the weekend on the way, Jesus overtook them and questioned them about their conversation. Expressing surprise that He could have been in Jerusalem and not have known of the execution of the One whom they had hoped would prove to be the Redeemer of Israel, they reviewed the events and concluded with the reports from the tomb mentioned above. Jesus reprimanded them for their slowness of hearts to believe the words of the prophets concerning the suffering and subsequent glory of the "Christ."⁷⁵ He then interpreted to them from Moses and all the prophets the prophecies concerning Himself.

At this time they approached the village of their destination and since the stranger seemed to plan to go on, the two companions constrained Him to stay for the evening meal since the day was far spent. Scholars have pointed out that the words which introduce the section that follows, which is the real climax, has the flavor of Hebrew or rather Aramaic. The same is noted of the expression, "And behold,

⁷³ Luke 24:22-23.

⁷⁴ Luke 24:15, 21, 25.

⁷⁵ Luke 24:26.

. . ." with which the entire Emmaus account opens. These are subtle clues to the reality of the report.⁷⁶ As they sat down, the invited guest suddenly assumed the role of the host,⁷⁷ took the bread, blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. This is not the only recorded time that Jesus had taken and blessed and broken and given bread. At the feeding of the multitudes and the last supper it had been His procedure, and doubtless many other times as well. To this moment "their eyes had been holden that they should not know him,"⁷⁸ but now "their eyes were opened, and they knew him; . . ."⁷⁹ When they recognized their guest, He vanished out of their sight. Now they knew it was Jesus which also accounted for the way their hearts had burned as he explained the Scripture to them along the road. Despite the late hour and the long distance, they immediately started back to Jerusalem to tell the "eleven." In breaking the news they also learned that Jesus had appeared to Simon.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Cf. Latham, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

⁷⁷ Cf. West, op. cit., p. 119. Burton S. Easton in An Outline of Christianity the Story of Our Civilization (New York: Bethelhem Publishers, Inc., 1926), Vol. I, p. 113.

⁷⁸ Luke 24:16.

⁷⁹ Luke 24:31.

⁸⁰ There is a variation in a few manuscripts which changes the ending of the verb "saying" which would make Cleopas and the unknown disciple report the appearance of Jesus to Simon. Lake in op. cit., p. 98-99, supports this alternate interpretation. However, it tends to make the narrative more obscure besides being insecure from a documentary point of view.

James Orr, who for his own evaluation declares this account to be "simple and direct, with every internal mark of truthfulness,"⁸¹ declares that critics "commonly treat the Emmaus narrative with considerable respect."⁸² Dr. Martin Dibelius who seems to lean heavily to "radical surgery," pays this account what is for him the high tribute, "Beside the Legend of the grave, the story of Emmaus is the only Easter Legend in the New Testament which has been preserved in an almost pure form,"⁸³ The above quotation illustrates Mr. Dibelius' general distrust of the gospel accounts, an attitude not shared by the present writer, but it also serves to illustrate the general high regard for the simple truthful account of the Emmaus incident.

P. Gardner-Smith, who is likewise very critical of the Resurrection accounts, says however of the Emmaus story,

St. Luke secures just the right atmosphere to suggest the mystery of the resurrection. Though the critic must needs dissect the story and examine its features in detail, yet something must be allowed for the impression which is created by the whole that here Luke is relating vividly but with restraint an actual historical occurrence.⁸⁴

Pertinent also are the remarks of Latham, who speaks of the account, and especially of the breaking of bread with

⁸¹ Orr, op. cit., p. 174.

⁸² Ibid., p. 176.

⁸³ Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, Bertram Lee Woolf, Translator (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 191.

⁸⁴ Gardner-Smith, op. cit., p. 66.

its following recognition and departure,

There is not a touch, which shows effort in the artist; the greatness is intrinsic and comes of itself. Now if this incident is fact, if we have here the account of an action of Christ, this I find it all of a piece with His personality, and it helps me to regard His work as a complete and unbroken whole; but if it is to be regarded as a work of imagination executed by a writer of that time, then all my notions about the laws of literary development are at once disordered by a prodigy dropping into the midst.⁸⁵

Some have been offended by Jesus' strong reaction to the unbelief of the Emmaus pair. Jesus exclaimed, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken." However, how perfectly this fits the personality of Jesus before the crucifixion. Nothing seemed to stir Him so much as a demonstration of unbelief. "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" On another occasion "he marvelled because of their unbelief."⁸⁶ A writer of fiction might have softened the words of his chief character, but as they stand they are words that would not have been easily forgotten by the two, and are in keeping with the Jesus we know.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Latham, op. cit., p. 133.

⁸⁶ Mark 9:19; 6:6. Cf. also Mark 16:14. Regarding the strength of Jesus' language cf. Latham, op. cit., pp. 114-116, 157. For further marks of authenticity cf. Ibid., pp. 111-112.

⁸⁷ W. J. Sparrow-Simpson: The Resurrection and Modern Thought (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), pp. 98-99, says, "There is the same searching, penetrating knowledge of the human heart, the same severity mixed with tender compassion, as in words spoken before He died." Maurice Goguel in The Birth of Christianity (New York: The

(5) The Sunday evening appearance. Both John and Luke give considerable detail about a meeting of Jesus with the disciples together on Sunday evening.⁸⁸ The Marcian fragment also refers to what must have been the same event, although time and place are not specific.⁸⁹ For our "photographic" impact, however, we will combine the John and Luke accounts which are not contradictory but supplementary. Both accounts take place in Jerusalem, both are on Sunday evening, both include the disciples who hear Jesus say "Peace be unto you," and who are invited to observe His wounds. The emotional range of these combined accounts is most revealing. They were gathered together behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews."⁹⁰ When Jesus suddenly appeared they were "terrified and affrighted, and supposed they beheld a spirit."⁹¹ They are calmed by His words and His positive identification. While John describes them as "glad," Luke is much more graphic and says "they disbelieved for joy, and wondered." Only then was Jesus able to present to them the instructions that follow.

Macmillan Co., 1954), p. 48, pays unintentional tribute to the Emmaus story by pointing out how the climax of this otherwise good story is ruined by the others declaring Jesus had appeared to Peter before the two from Emmaus could break the news. In fiction this would be poor, but if it happened that way, the writer must yield to truth rather than the laws of story telling!

⁸⁸ Luke 24:36-43, and John 20:19-23.

⁸⁹ Mark 16:14. Perhaps also I Corinthians 15:5.

⁹⁰ John 20:19.

⁹¹ Luke 24:37.

It is this scene that sees the attitude of the group of disciples as a whole swing from incredulity to belief. Aside from Thomas, who was not present, there is no further evidence of unbelief.⁹² We cannot but be impressed with the opposition that had to be overcome in the disciples before they accepted the Resurrection. These life-like accounts are in vivid contrast to those who say that the disciples' hopes and aspirations were the ground out of which the Resurrection faith sprang. The idea was not only strange, "but even alarming to the disciples as a body; we see that belief was enforced only after long resistance."⁹³ Another has summarized his reaction to this scene by saying,

The whole account is psychologically most natural, and sheds vivid light by contrast on the theories which see the origin of belief in the Resurrection in an eager credulity and proneness to mistake hallucinations for reality on the part of the Apostles.⁹⁴

(6) The convincing of Thomas. Only John has preserved this brief but illuminating story. Little is known of Thomas, but the few references to him fit well with the portrayal given here.⁹⁵ Eight days after the Resurrection the disciples

⁹² For a consideration of the "doubting" in Matthew 28:17, cf. post p. 111.

⁹³ Westcott, The Revelation of the Risen Lord, op. cit., p. 65.

⁹⁴ Orr, op. cit., p. 180.

⁹⁵ In John 11:16, he is portrayed as something of a pessimist, and in John 14:5 he asks for clarification and explanation of a statement of Jesus. Latham says of this, "He shows the characteristic realism of the fairly well to do peasant; this made him an invaluable witness for matters of fact, . . ." Latham, op. cit., p. 179.

were again together behind closed doors. As the narrative does not indicate whether it was in Jerusalem, Galilee, or some other place, it helps us little in discerning the geographical movements of the disciples. Thomas had not been present on the occasion of Jesus' appearance to the group the week before and refused to believe their reports. This, of course was not too different from the reception which the words of the women received from the other disciples!⁹⁶ "In a spirit which the 'modern' mind should appreciate,"⁹⁷ he had emphatically declared he would not believe unless he saw and felt Jesus' wounds. Again, Jesus suddenly appeared. He greeted the disciples but proceeded immediately to Thomas to offer him the proof he desired. The reaction of the doubter was immediate and his conviction absolute. Utterly convinced he cried, "My Lord and my God." Jesus' words which followed were neither a commendation nor a rebuke, but have been a comfort to Christians through many generations. "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Because of this "blessing" to future believers, critics have said the whole story is an invention to enclose such a word of comfort to later Christians.⁹⁸ If so, how

⁹⁶ Luke 24:11 and Mark 16:11.

⁹⁷ Orr, op. cit., p. 183.

⁹⁸ Cf. David Friedrich Strauss, A New Life of Jesus (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), Vol. II, pp. 413-414. Also cf. ante p. 47.

cleverly and forcefully is the point presented! The story itself is of a real person and a real experience and the words of Jesus are such as one might well expect. This "striking narrative of the Lord's treatment of a doubting spirit" does awaken one's confidence.⁹⁹

(7) The restoration of Peter. This account¹⁰⁰ is given at such length that a minute outline will not be attempted. The focal point of the story is without doubt the last verses which involve a misunderstanding that had arisen as to whether the writer would die before Jesus' return. Since it also involved Peter, the story of his reinstatement is given, showing Jesus' words both to Peter and "the beloved disciple." The first fourteen verses give the setting and situation out of which the remainder of the account grew.

The array of detail in this chapter is full of interest and lends support to its having been the account of an eye-witness. We have not insisted on the Johannine authorship of this book in this study, but let us assume for this section that it is and observe the pertinent details.¹⁰¹ Seven

⁹⁹ Orr, op. cit., p. 184.

¹⁰⁰ Entire chapter of John 21.

¹⁰¹ Adolf Harnack who ascribed the greater part of the Gospel of John to "John the Presbyter" was forced by these and other indication of an eye-witness account to say, "It is to me clear that large portions of it, at any rate, come from an eye-witness, and this, so far as I see, can only be John the son of Zebedee." In another place he says, "That in some way John, son of Zebedee, stands behind the fourth Gospel, cannot be denied." Adolf Harnack in The Chronology of Old Christian Literature, Vol. I, pp. 258 and 677 respectively. Quoted in Latham, op. cit., pp. 231 and 258.

disciples, five of whom are identified, including John, followed the suggestion of Peter to go fishing on the Sea of Galilee. A night of fishing brought nothing. The boat full of men was about "two hundred" cubits from the land, and at least Peter had removed his outer garments. Jesus, as yet unrecognized, stood on the bank and instructed them to cast the net on the other side. They were amazed at the weight of the catch and knew they could not land it in the boat. John said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter girded his coat about him, left the others with the fish, and swam to Jesus. Note the intimate detail to this point. The names, the distances, the minute actions, the conversations, and even the headlong plunge of Peter, all give one the sense of an intimate recollection.

At this point Latham has made a keen observation.

I will go back now to the text of the chapter, and I shall follow the history in a regular way. We left it when Peter had just cast himself into the sea; we are not told about his reaching the shore; neither do we know whether any express recognition passed between his Master and himself. If this story had been a literary production instead of the report of an eye-witness we should have had particulars of the interview. The author would not have denied himself the relation of Peter's reception by the Master to whom he had made his way through the sea. The writer of a story knows all about his characters wherever they are; while the witness can only speak to the doings of those who are about him. What makes me feel therefore that the narrative comes from an eye-witness who remained on board, as John did, is that we hear nothing about Peter after he left the vessel, until they have all rejoined him on the shore: when Peter has left the ship the writer, instead of occupying himself with him--though Peter was the prominent personage--goes on to say what was done by those of the crew who remained in the vessel.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Latham, *op. cit.*, p. 255. Cf. also Wilbur M.

Note further the details. There were one hundred and fifty-three large fish, and still "the net was not rent."¹⁰³ To a fisherman, as we know John to have been, the holding of the net was a significant fact, as would be the number, not only because it was so large but likely on such occasions the profits were divided among the men in terms of shares, making numbering necessary.¹⁰⁴ Even the comment, "And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord,"¹⁰⁵ gives this account that sense of awe so characteristic of the Resurrection narratives. The story of Peter's reinstatement with its careful play on the two words for love is further evidence of the intimate knowledge of the writer relative to the incident.

Even Jesus' addressing Peter as Simon, son of John or Joanes, reveals one of those marks of authenticity with which the account abounds. Jesus always addressed him in the gospels by this title or as Simon. The writer of John consistently refers to him as Simon Peter, but Jesus does not so speak.¹⁰⁶

Before noting some of the things the foregoing

Smith, Therefore Stand (Boston: W. A. Wilde and Co., 1945), pp. 388-389.

¹⁰³ John 21:11.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Latham, op. cit., pp. 255-258.

¹⁰⁵ John 21:12.

¹⁰⁶ See Matthew 16:17; 17:25; Mark 14:37; Luke 22:31; John 1:42; 11:15;

accounts illustrate, mention should be made of the appearance to the five hundred brethren at once.¹⁰⁷ This number is not mentioned by any but Paul, but there is strong evidence that it was the meeting in Galilee reported by Matthew.¹⁰⁸ Such a large number of believers¹⁰⁹ would not be likely to assemble unless it were prearranged. Only the meeting in Galilee, so far as we have record, was by appointment.¹¹⁰ In the stories we have observed, His appearance, while at very strategic times, was not anticipated or at least prearranged by the disciples. It was in Galilee that most of Jesus' admirers lived and it would be much more simple to assemble a large group there. The reference in Matthew that "some doubted" would be in perfect keeping with this theory. The observation that this was the one meeting by appointment reconciles the supposed conflict between the "Galilean tradition" and the "Jerusalem tradition," more of which will be mentioned in the following chapter.

In the "photographic" stories we have viewed above it is interesting to note that four of them make the instant of belief in Jesus' Resurrection the focal point, and a fifth gives us the psychological moment when they recognized

¹⁰⁷ I Corinthians 15:6.

¹⁰⁸ So concludes Swete, op. cit., pp. 82 ff; Orr, op. cit., pp. 189 ff; and Latham, pp. 279 ff.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Acts 10:41.

¹¹⁰ Matthew 28:16 refers to a "mountain where Jesus had appointed them." Cf. also Matthew 28:7, 10, and Mark 16:7.

Him. We spent considerable time on the story of the visit of the two disciples to the tomb. It was on the basis of the evidence of the graveclothes that "the other disciple" saw through and believed. Mary Magdalene's precise point of recognition was when Jesus spoke her name. Thomas yielded to belief and worship as Jesus confronted him with His wounded hands, and Cleopas and his companion recognized Him "in the breaking of bread,"¹¹¹ after Jesus had assumed the role of the host. In each of these cases, unless it is that of Mary Magdalene who is not specifically mentioned as present at any subsequent appearances, Jesus reconfirmed His Resurrection by appearing in their presence again. The above observations are not only interesting from the point of view of the various senses represented through which the "convincing instant" was relayed, but show how interested the various writers were in reporting the strategic moment in the account. In addition to these, the story in John twenty-one reveals that the moment they realized they had made a huge catch, John cried to Peter, "It is the Lord."¹¹² We need only recall that another miraculous draught of fish occurred some three years earlier when the disciples were making up their minds to follow Jesus.¹¹³ Knowing of Jesus' oft-used method of teaching by events, it argues for there

¹¹¹ Luke 24:35.

¹¹² John 21:7.

¹¹³ Luke 5:1-11.

being two separate events rather than a confusion of one as some have suggested.

The foregoing study should leave several general impressions well established in our minds. There is, on the one hand, great variety in the witness to the Resurrected Christ, while on the other hand, a strong unity binds all of the stories together. The personnel is varied, as is the frame of mind of the people to whom Jesus appeared. The appointed meeting in Galilee was to men of an entirely different frame of mind from that on Sunday evening in the closed room, or of Mary Magdalene as she wept outside the tomb. The number of people to whom Jesus appeared ranged from one to five hundred--the place from Joseph's garden to the secret room and on to the lake and mountainside in Galilee. "It is hardly possible to think of a greater variety of circumstances calculated to test the reality of the impression made on them."¹¹⁴ In the midst of this great variety, the manner of their testimony is one. Jesus appeared in a new and wonderful manner. His presence calmed the troubled waters of doubt and fear and sorrow. He spoke to them, instructed them, commanded them, and inspired them. He left them with no doubts relative to His identity, reality, or authority.

Despite the tremendous forces and implications rising

¹¹⁴ William Milligan, The Resurrection of Our Lord (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1901), p. 51. For a good summary of major points of agreement, cf. Smith, op. cit., p. 403.

out of the Resurrection, these stories are presented with a simple directness and disarming naturalness. The writers do not hesitate to give detail of place, personnel, and circumstances. In much of it there is abundant evidence of it being the report of an eye-witness. Milligan gives us a good summary of the manner in which the witness is presented.

It is distinguished by a simplicity which avoids all exaggeration, makes no boast of enthusiastic feeling, and frankly confesses a large measure of ignorance and blindness; whereas, had it been the result of either conscious or unconscious invention, it could hardly have failed to bear marks of the excitement which gave rise to it. At the same time it is presented with a gravity and seriousness showing how fully alive the witnesses are to the nature of the fact to which they testify. There is no lightness of sentiment in regard to it, but rather a deep and solemn sense of its supreme importance--such a sense as leads them to communicate it with eager haste to one another, and not only to speak it among themselves, but to proclaim it in the most public and open, in the boldest and most decisive manner, . . ."¹¹⁵

When we realize that the Resurrection accounts come from five and possibly six separate sources, the unity of their witness and manner of presentation is even more striking. In addition, among the stories given in detail and outlined above, with the exception of the incident of Thomas, each one is referred to by at least two accounts. Here we have illustrated the "converging lines of evidence" referred to in our criteria for measuring credulity.¹¹⁶

Summary of the Emotional Reactions Upon Hearing of

¹¹⁵ Op. cit., pp. 51-52.

¹¹⁶ Supra, p. 81.

Jesus' Resurrection. In the preceding section we noted the seven accounts given in detail, observing the content of their testimony and the many marks of genuineness. In order to examine the nature of the cumulative religious experience of the witnesses, we now make a summary of the emotional phenomena recorded in the combined accounts. The observation of such should give us additional clues to the reality of the Resurrection experience.

The single word that best describes the first reaction to the reports of Jesus' Resurrection is incredulity. The first reports came to the disciples from the women who reported the message of the angel, "He is risen." Referring to the disciples, Luke tells us, "And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them."¹¹⁷ Mary Magdalene's report of actually seeing Jesus was greeted with much the same spirit.¹¹⁸ We are told that the story of the two who came from Emmaus did not receive immediate acceptance,¹¹⁹ despite the fact that Jesus had appeared to Peter in the meanwhile.¹²⁰ It might appear on the surface that this disbelief indicates a conflict in reports, since Luke tells us, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Peter." However, by Sunday evening with ten disciples

¹¹⁷ Luke 24:11.

¹¹⁸ Mark 16:11.

¹¹⁹ Mark 16:13.

¹²⁰ Luke 24:34.

present as well as others, there was a considerable mixture of feeling and degrees of belief. Certain features of the story of Cleopas and his companion must have made it hard to reconcile with the then known information about Jesus' resurrected body and manner of appearance. That the group was not a calm, certain, believing body is verified in Luke's account when he describes them as "terrified and affrighted" when Jesus actually appeared a short time after the two from Emmaus brought the news.¹²¹

Thomas, of course, was the real "hold out" among the disciples, refusing to believe the cumulative testimony of his companions. Still, with the exception of "the other disciple" who saw the evidence of the graveclothes "and believed,"¹²² we have no evidence that any other of the disciples believed until Jesus actually appeared to them. It is small wonder that Jesus "upbraided them with their hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen."¹²³

We are not to imagine that this disbelief was mere apathy. Excitement sent two of the disciples running to the tomb.¹²⁴ Before the day was over, others and perhaps all,

¹²¹ Luke 24:37.

¹²² John 20:8.

¹²³ Mark 16:14.

¹²⁴ John 20:3 ff. We note, however, that this excitement was stirred by a report of Jesus' body being stolen rather than that He was risen.

if they dared run the risk of being encountered by Jesus' enemies, must have examined the tomb. Amazement was the word used by the two on the road to describe their reaction to the report that Jesus had risen. But still there was unbelief.¹²⁵ Questioning and discussion¹²⁶ there was. But these men who had seen Jesus die, apparently in utter defeat at the hands of His enemies, were not a credulous group of enthusiasts quick to manufacture a new faith.

We pause only long enough to ask ourselves if this reaction is what we would expect. Under the circumstances it is. It coincides perfectly with their utter despair which we noted earlier. Some have felt it did not reflect too well on the disciples' spiritual alertness, but all have had to acknowledge that it is a sign of their sincerity and honesty.¹²⁷

Summary of the Emotional Reactions in the Presence of Jesus or of the Announcing Angels. We have no record of angels appearing to Jesus' followers other than the women, but the word most often used to describe their reaction was that of fear.¹²⁸ Mark 16:1-8 is the most graphic. The women were amazed by the presence of the white-robed "young

¹²⁵ Luke 24:22. Cf. verse 21.

¹²⁶ Luke 24:14-15. Cf. also verse 38.

¹²⁷ Cf. Strauss, The Life of Jesus, Vol. II, p. 846.

¹²⁸ It should be noted that the guards were aware of the angelic presence and "for fear of them the watchers did quake, and became as dead men." Matthew 28:4.

man" in the tomb. His first word is to calm their fears, saying, "Be not amazed."¹²⁹ However, they "fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them:" While not so graphically expressed, the same atmosphere is preserved in the other accounts. In Matthew we see them running to tell the disciples, departing "quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy."¹³⁰ Luke's observation, "and they remembered his words,"¹³¹ may apply either to the words of the "two men" or to the predictive words of Jesus. If the former, it suggests the excitement they were under in which such "remembering" would be tested. Luke says also that seeing the men in "dazzling apparel" they "were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth."¹³² If these women were pictured as serene and calm under such unusual circumstances we might question the story, but this reaction is in perfect keeping with the "cause" presented in the gospel narratives.

Although the disciples were somewhat prepared, the sudden appearance of Jesus in their midst on Sunday evening caused them to be "terrified and affrighted" since they "supposed that they beheld a spirit."¹³³ Fear is also

¹²⁹ Cf. also Matthew 28:5.

¹³⁰ Matthew 28:8.

¹³¹ Luke 24:8.

¹³² Luke 24:5.

¹³³ Luke 24:37.

indicated when Jesus appeared to the women as reported by Matthew since Jesus addressed them with "Fear not."¹³⁴

While we have observed the general reaction of disbelief to the reports of Jesus' Resurrection, there are two interesting allusions to it, even in His presence. We have already alluded to the observation that "some doubted" in the Matthew account of the great commission.¹³⁵ This is easily understood if the group contained a large group of people who had not previously seen the Resurrected Christ as would be the case of the five hundred. Luke's expression, "And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, . . ."¹³⁶ is a clear insight into the mixed emotions of the group on Sunday evening as it dawned upon them that Jesus truly was alive. Phillips' translation reads, "And while they still could not believe that anything so glorious could be true and were quite bewildered, Jesus said, 'Have you anything here to eat?'"¹³⁷ The combination of disbelief and joy (in this case the disbelief being of a different nature than what is generally meant) is included in our common expression, "Too good to be true." The reaction of the disciples was not unlike that of a mother who is told that the soldier son, whom she thought to be dead, has

¹³⁴ Matthew 28:10.

¹³⁵ Matthew 28:17. Cf. ante p.111.

¹³⁶ Luke 24:41.

¹³⁷ J. B. Phillips, The Gospels translated into Modern English (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 186.

crossed back from the enemy lines. The writer has preserved for us the very inner flavor of that dramatic, strategic moment, as the disciples moved from questionings, doubt, and fear, to confidence and praise.

It is no doubt here that we should make mention of the note of joy that sprang up with the conviction that Jesus was alive. In the passage we have been discussing above, the joy is the dominant emotion. They were made "unbelievers from joy."¹³⁸ John, with less vividness, says, "The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord."¹³⁹ As the women left the tomb, having been told that Jesus was alive, they ran "with fear and great joy."¹⁴⁰ Here is another of those combinations of emotions which on the surface seem in utter contradiction, but are in perfect harmony with the stimuli and circumstances. Luke concludes his gospel with a summary of the emotions following the Ascension of Jesus. They "returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple blessing God."¹⁴¹

Of critical importance in this summary of emotions are the expressions of worship buried in the Resurrection accounts. Mention has been made of the women bowing down

¹³⁸ So translates A. M. Bruce in The Expositor's Greek Testament, W. Robertson Nicoll, Editor (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 601.

¹³⁹ John 20:20.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew 28:8.

¹⁴¹ Luke 24:52-53. Cf. Patterson-Smyth, op. cit., pp. 476 ff.

in the presence of the "two men" in Luke.¹⁴² Let us observe worship as directed to Jesus. The first witness is the first worshipper. If we are to associate the account of Matthew 28:9 with the story of Mary Magdalene in John,¹⁴³ Mary upon recognizing that the stranger was Jesus, fell at His feet in worship, crying, "Rabboni!" The expression itself is packed with emotion and respect, John having preserved for us the Aramaic, and, as some feel, "Galilean" term.¹⁴⁴

The experience of Thomas is even more graphic. "My Lord and my God," coming from the lips of a Jew, expresses nothing short of complete conviction and submission to Jesus as the Resurrected Son of God.

The believers gathered together on the mountain in Galilee, worshipped Jesus when He appeared.¹⁴⁵ Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed the gathered disciples from the Mount of Olives at the time of the ascension. They in turn worshipped Him there.¹⁴⁶

The sense of awe in Jesus' presence is but an aspect of the same experience. The disciples on the shore of Galilee "durst not inquire of him."¹⁴⁷ The two going to

¹⁴² Supra, p. 118.

¹⁴³ Supra, p. 96. Some do make this association. Others do not. Cf. Orr, op. cit., p. 166.

¹⁴⁴ Westcott, The Gospel According to Saint John, op. cit., p. 344.

¹⁴⁵ Matthew 28:17.

¹⁴⁶ Luke 24:52.

¹⁴⁷ John 21:12.

Emmaus felt their "heart buring" within them.¹⁴⁸ Even the expressions, they "supposed that they beheld a spirit," and they "disbelieved for joy and wondered" convey the sense of awe and worship.¹⁴⁹ These expressions and this atmosphere are deeply saturated into the Resurrection account. They reveal significant clues to the nature of the unexpressable experience of the Resurrection witnesses.

Another spirit that pervades the entire account is that of excitement. This was an event of no small magnitude. We find people running from place to place.¹⁵⁰ Not only so, they "run quickly." We have previously referred to the "amazement," the "trembling and astonishment." We see people talking in excited tones. The very sentences, "He is risen!" and "It is the Lord!" along with others, carry the atmosphere.¹⁵¹ Characteristic of the underlying spirit is the story of the two men of Emmaus. It was evening when they discovered the identity of their remarkable Guest. The day was "far spent." Supper was being served. Seven miles away was the city of Jerusalem from which they had just walked. Fatigue, distance, peril, darkness was forgotten as the two believers "rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem."¹⁵² This is not

¹⁴⁸ Luke 24:32.

¹⁴⁹ Luke 24:37, 41.

¹⁵⁰ Mark 16:8; Luke 24:24; John 20:2, 3; Matthew 28:8.

¹⁵¹ Luke 24:33-35.

¹⁵² Luke 24:33.

the story of half-convinced, disinterested men. Something tremendous had happened and they responded accordingly.

Even the element of confusion is in perfect keeping with the event. Some reacted one way and some another. The body of disciples considered the report of the women as idle talk, but Peter ran to see.¹⁵³ Some of the women were frightened to silence. Some ran to tell.¹⁵⁴ The strange mixtures of emotion have been referred to. We sense from our examination that these are real people and real events. Speaking of this element in the accounts, James Orr reminds us that the Resurrection day was one of great excitement, and the above is "what we would expect in the narratives of the Gospels, and what, in fact, we find."¹⁵⁵

The Emphasis upon the Scripture in Relation to the Resurrection. Little has been said thus far about the continual references to the "Scripture" in the Resurrection accounts. Paul speaks of Jesus' death "for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures."¹⁵⁶ Jesus rebuked the disciples on the one hand because "they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen,"¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Mark 16:14.

¹⁵⁴ Mark 16:3; Matthew 28:8. Of note on ante, p.98.

¹⁵⁵ Orr, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁵⁶ I Corinthians 15:3-4.

¹⁵⁷ Mark 16:14.

but the two on the road to Emmaus were chided because they believed not all the prophets had spoken.¹⁵⁸ Then "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."¹⁵⁹ A good part of the last discourse in Luke is given to the correlation between Jesus' death and Resurrection and the fulfillment of Scripture.

Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.¹⁶⁰

Some of these texts are no doubt given to us in the book of Acts, for here we find the apostles often presenting Jesus as the Risen Messiah, predicted in the Scriptures.¹⁶¹

The definiteness of the expectation of the Messiah in the first century has long been known. Only recently among the amazing discoveries in the area of the Dead Sea has been found a page on which is given texts relating to the expected Messiah.¹⁶² We have incidents in the New Testament which show how carefully people considered Jesus and tried to

¹⁵⁸ Luke 24:25.

¹⁵⁹ Verse 27. "The other disciple" in John believed before he knew the Scripture "that he must rise again from the dead." (John 20:9)

¹⁶⁰ Luke 24:44-47.

¹⁶¹ Acts 2:24 ff; 13:32 ff. Gf. also Acts 8:30 ff.

¹⁶² A. Dupont-Sommer, The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes: New Studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., Ltd., 1954), p. 174.

determine if He met the Messianic qualifications. "What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"¹⁶³ "When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?"¹⁶⁴ Time and again the gospel writers, especially Matthew, insert Old Testament prophecies with "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through the prophet," or similar expressions. Simeon and Anna were in the temple waiting for the "Lord's Christ."¹⁶⁵

Viewing the emphasis on the Scripture in the Resurrection accounts as well as the material above, one conscious fact begins to emerge. The popular Messianic concept did not include in it the death and Resurrection of the Messiah. Had there been no Old Testament prophecies of this part of the Messianic role, it would have been very hard for the disciples to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, as it would have been likewise difficult to convince others of contemporary Jewry. Hence the necessity for the disciples to be shown the Old Testament Messianic statements and hence also the prominent place the concept occupies in the New Testament accounts.

¹⁶³ John 7:41-42.

¹⁶⁴ John 7:31.

¹⁶⁵ Luke 2:22 ff.

IV. THE PROBLEM RESTATED, EVALUATION, AND SUMMARY

We are now prepared to ask anew two questions which grow out of the investigation of this chapter, summarize the evidence, and apply our criteria for evaluation. We must bear constantly in mind the wealth of evidence presented in Chapter Two showing how completely the first generation Christians believed that Jesus rose from the dead. In this chapter we have the stories and incidents upon which that conviction is reported to be based. In Chapter Three we observed the various explanations that have been made as to how the disciples arrived at this triumphant faith. In the foregoing section of the present chapter we have had an opportunity to observe the transformation from despair and doubt through questioning and amazement to joy and praise.

Do the Recorded Experiences have the Marks of Valid Religious Experience? We must not forget the unlikely condition of the disciples' attitudes and emotions following the crucifixion. Weeping, despair, and fear is what we would expect, and the record confirms that such was true.¹⁶⁶ Latourette, the historian, points out that it is obvious from the records that "the disciples did not expect the resurrection and that it took them completely by surprise."¹⁶⁷ But among

¹⁶⁶ Supra, pp. 84-91.

¹⁶⁷ Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 58.

these men came Jesus, newly risen from the grave. What is the effect?

Awe marks the presence of Jesus. We have noted the "burning heart," and the hesitancy about asking Jesus His identity, along with other marks of this atmosphere.¹⁶⁸ Fascination is illustrated in nearly every account. Once Jesus appears on the scene in every story immediately one senses His centrality. Every eye is upon Him, so to speak. His presence and words command the situation. We have fear and amazement, yet no one flees from His presence.¹⁶⁹ The final scene with His disciples illustrates the fascination of the Resurrected Jesus.

And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven?¹⁷⁰

Ramsey caught the sense of awe and fascination running through these accounts and speaks of it as the "manner of their testimony." It is this manner which gives them unity and which "is very hard to attribute to anything else except the spiritually subtle nature of the event itself."¹⁷¹

In the sections where we have pointed out the worship offered to Jesus, we have ample illustration of the

¹⁶⁸ Supra, pp. 121-122.

¹⁶⁹ Supra, pp. 117-119.

¹⁷⁰ Acts 1:10-11.

¹⁷¹ A. Michael Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 63.

creature feeling and the awareness of the Divine person-
ality.¹⁷² It reaches its climax of expression in Thomas' cry, "My Lord and my God!"

Power, however, was perhaps the outstanding feature of the experience of meeting the Resurrected Jesus. Its nature, extent, variety of manifestations, and permanent effects are to be observed. From despair to rejoicing, from hiding behind locked doors to praising God in the temple, from fishing to evangelizing, such was the power kindled by their experience. "One of the compelling proofs of the resurrection is that the crucifixion left the disciples in despair, and that, hopeless, they were transformed by their experience of the risen Jesus."¹⁷³

Yes, all the ingredients are there, fused and blended in perfect harmony. These men and women met the Supernatural. It is adequate "cause" for the men, without which there is no adequate cause for the church.¹⁷⁴ These experiences have all the marks of reality.

Can the Testimony to These Experiences be Trusted?

This is no academic question. The author of a book on the origin of Christianity, not yet ten years off the press, includes in his introduction an "humble avowal of not having

¹⁷² Supra, pp. 120-121.

¹⁷³ Latourette, op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. the remark of A. M. Fairbairn, Studies in the Life of Christ (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882), pp. 354-355.

yet discovered that Jesus never existed."¹⁷⁵ On the matter of the Resurrection he is neither so humble nor so reserved! He skirts the problem of how the dynamic Resurrection faith was born, using the old unacceptable cycle that their faith begot some visions which begot their faith!¹⁷⁶ With dogmatic emphasis seemingly to offset his omission of evidence, this man concludes that the "Gospel stories do not show us the growth of the disciples' emotions into the belief that Jesus was risen from the dead." They are but "fictions which faith produced for its own justification."¹⁷⁷

Investigation indicates that the above is absolutely wrong. It is wrong from the standpoint of the disciples' experience as we have just shown. It is wrong in its assertion that these are mere myths and fictions. In presenting the individual stories, time and again we have observed the marks of reality as well as veracity.¹⁷⁸ Lines of evidence converge from every side.¹⁷⁹ Despite the unique nature of the Resurrection, "the strength, vividness, and permanence" is not that of an hallucination. There is unity in diversity, a "fundamental agreement between many

¹⁷⁵ Alfred Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, L. P. Jack, Translator (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948), p. 10.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁷⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ante, 93, 95, 99-100, 103, 106, 107-108.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. criteria on ante, p. 81.

observers in what is experienced."¹⁸⁰ The testimony of these Galilean peasants is only accentuated by their nonprofessional status.¹⁸¹

Let these simple stories drive home their message. They are inadequate only in that they are unable to express the inexpressable. Even Mr. Loisy has to take into account the manner in which the Resurrection stories are presented and say, "There is, however, good reason for adding that the authors of our texts are to be credited with relative sobriety in the shaping of their work."¹⁸² Could it be because they are trying to honestly tell us what happened that first Easter morning and during the forty days following?

Adding to Mr. Loisy's testimony, we will summarize our conclusions by quoting another.

The resurrection stories we find in our Gospels have an air of soberness and reality about them. There is nothing ecstatic or incoherent in these accounts. They are not the records of unbalanced minds. These are plain matter-of-fact people telling just what happened to themselves. They tell how impossible it was for them to believe in the possibility of the resurrection at first. They tell how Jesus was not immediately recognized by many to whom he appeared, and even by some of his most intimate friends. These are damaging facts, but they are not glossed over. Taken as a whole, these narratives do not seem like the products of partisan prejudice or like unbridled flights of fancy. They have all the artlessness of simple honesty. They furnish just such testimony as the facts would warrant, and such as plain people convinced beyond any question or doubt would give.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. ante, pp. 81-82.

¹⁸¹ Cf. ante, p. 83.

¹⁸² Loisy, op. cit., p. 95.

They have all the signs of veracity.¹⁸³

In view of the tremendous issues centering around the Resurrection, we who live in the twentieth century naturally wish we could talk to the Resurrection witnesses, hear the details that are not recorded, and fill in the gaps of our limited knowledge. In the next chapter we propose to consider why we do not have more information on this important subject. However, for the present chapter we summarize our conclusions by asserting that the evidence supports the belief that the New Testament account of how the first Christians came to believe in the Resurrection is true. We have a valid description of what happened, in the way it happened. We accept the witness.

¹⁸³ Doremus A. Hayes, The Resurrection Fact (Nashville, Tenn.: Cokesbury Press, 1932), p. 212. Cf. also West, op. cit., p. 208, and Milligan, op. cit., pp. 48 ff.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM PRESENTED BY THE NATURE OF THE RECORD OF THE RESURRECTION

The fulcrum upon which this study hinges is the historically established fact that the first generation Christians believed that Jesus rose from the dead. This point has been established, and we cannot for a moment let its importance fade from our consciousness. In Chapter two we investigated the reason why these men believed as they did. In Chapter three we let the witnesses of the Resurrected Jesus be heard and tried especially to see why they reacted as they did. In this chapter we turn to the writers of the Resurrection accounts and try to answer, in part at least, the question of why they wrote and selected as they did.

I. THE METHOD AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS APPROACH

To try to determine why men wrote as they did is obviously not an easy matter. Centuries divide us. We are likewise separated by great chasms in terms of our culture and outlook on life. Scholars have served us well in trying to recapture the atmosphere, way of thinking, and way of life as found in the New Testament, but we must still acknowledge our limitations.

We begin by searching for any statements from the New Testament writers themselves relative to selective purpose or

self-limitation. When they tell us their objective or method, we will try to take them seriously. To do otherwise would be, to say the least, unfair.

Unfortunately, in many cases no "preface" has been preserved and we are faced with the much more hazardous task of observing from the inner clues what special emphasis the writer is trying to make and hence his general limitations and rules of selection. If due to limited purpose they omit material--even material we would like to have--we nevertheless must still grant them the privilege of such omission. Therefore it is important that we try, as far as possible, to observe the writers' law of selection and avoid unjust criticism concerning what they have or have not done.

We are not primarily concerned in this study as to the sources from which the writers received their material. We do not ignore this problem or consider it unworthy of study, but we recognize that our accounts are literary units and not disconnected compilations of fragments put together in scrapbook fashion. We are more concerned with why they selected what they did than where it came from. This is a case of primary and secondary consideration rather than omitting one in favor of the other.

Further, we do not insist on the traditional authorship of the accounts. While we may have good reason to consider Matthew the Publican and John Mark the authors of our first two gospels, since they do not within their writing so state, we will not press the matter. Using our basic

premise that the writer of Luke and Acts is the same, we only insist that he was a companion of Paul based on the "we" sections in Acts, and that he had contact with eye-witnesses by his own confession.¹ As to the Gospel of John, we follow the practice of accepting his testimony as being an eyewitness referred to as the "beloved disciple." When we refer to them as "John," "Luke," and the like, it is for the sake of convenience and the above should be borne in mind. We consider Paul the author of First Corinthians on the basis of its own assertion.²

II. OBSERVATION OF GENERAL PROBLEMS IN THE RESURRECTION DATA

Its Fragmentary Nature. The most common grievance against the Evangelists' record of the Resurrection is that they have not given us enough. The concluding chapter of each gospel is relatively short and is supported in addition only by a few verses in Acts and a short list of appearances in First Corinthians fifteen. There are only some ten appearances recorded. No writer gives more than six of these. Chronological order is often hard to determine. That this is true is not disputed. It is open to observation. Staunch believers in the Resurrection do not hesitate to admit the fragmentary and limited source material.

No detailed narrative has come down to us of the

¹ Luke 1:2.

² I Corinthians 1:1, 13-17; 3:4-6; 4:6; 16:21.

risen Christ and the intercourse of the Forty Days. Just a collection of several little stories as they impressed this one or that one--this group or that.³

Critics, assuming that we have all, or nearly all of the facts circulated about the Resurrection, have made a good deal about the limited source material from which we have to draw. When we examine the New Testament accounts once more, serious consideration will be given this problem.

Questions Left Unanswered. Here especially we are aware of the gulf of time that separates us. As has been pointed out, the writings which are now grouped in the New Testament

. . . were written for purely practical purposes: to meet specific needs felt in those days. They were not prepared to edify or to instruct subsequent generations which might desire historical insights into the past.⁴

For example, we find Jesus appearing to the disciples in both Galilee and Jerusalem. The final appearance was on the Mount of Olives. The movement back and forth between these places is not given. While the location of the appearance to Thomas is not given, it seems on the surface to be the same as the preceding appearance to the other disciples.⁵ If this is so, why did the disciples linger in Jerusalem for an additional eight days after the Resurrection? These are typical of

³ J. Paterson-Smyth, A People's Life of Christ (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 481.

⁴ Morten Scott Enslin, Christian Beginnings (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 148.

⁵ John 20:19 ff.

the details we would like to have.

We further observe that the writers give us nothing at all by way of description of the moment of Jesus' actual Resurrection or of His emergence from the tomb. No systematic account is given of His appearance or of the nature of His Resurrection body. Such information must be collected from incidental allusions. Some have criticized the evidence given as not being the kind to satisfy the demands of science. In some cases such demands have been fantastic. Renan, for example, asks that the miracle of the Resurrection be performed before "a commission composed of psychologists, physicists, chemists, persons accustomed to historical criticism," and be repeated as often as desired.⁶ Perhaps it was of such a mentality that Jesus spoke of when He said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead."⁷ However, friend and foe to Christianity agree that if opportunity were offered certain questions would be asked.

Alleged Contradictions. As stated in the Introduction our purpose is not to give a complete harmony of the accounts, since others have done this in a satisfactory manner. However, we must take note of the charge of "irreconcilable contradiction" which has often been leveled against the

⁶ Quoted from Introduction of Renan's French Life of Jesus by James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), p. 146.

⁷ Luke 16:31.

Resurrection records. No one insists that a harmony of the accounts arranged in precise chronological and geographical order is simple. The real division of attitude comes when some insist that a harmony is impossible. For example, Emil Brunner pours disdain on any who would consider a harmony.

Whoever asserts that the New Testament gives us a definite consistent account of the Resurrection is either ignorant or unconscientious. It is impossible to co-ordinate the different narratives into a unity, and these inconsistencies do not lie merely on the surface.⁸

Typical of these alleged inconsistencies is the charge that in some instances Jesus has a "spiritual" body and at other times it is a "material" one. Some have reclassified the entire "tradition" as early and late according to how the body is pictured, the "spiritual" being considered the early tradition and the "material" the late.⁹ As has already been pointed out in this paper this is an arbitrary either/or which is not justified by the account. The very narrative which describes the disciples as mistaking Jesus for a spirit tells of His eating before them.¹⁰ So throughout the accounts His identity and reality are held in balance against His new manner of life.

⁸ Emil Brunner, The Mediator (London: Lutterworth Press, 1934), p. 577. Italics mine. This language seems a bit strong for a man living in the twentieth century when many "irreconcilable inconsistencies" in Luke and John have been clarified and the authors vindicated. Cf. ante, pp. 14 ff, also p. 79.

⁹ Cf. Kirsopp Lake's The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ where the entire book is built around this idea.

¹⁰ Luke 24:36 ff.

Gardner-Smith presents another "irreconcilable inconsistency" which is overworked by many critics. There is no lack of authority and dogmatism in his language.

A broad question emerges first, and it is one of the most important. Two contrasting traditions are apparent in the gospels; according to one the appearances of the risen Lord, or at least the first of such appearances, took place in Galilee; so Matthew thought, so Mark seems to have believed, and so thought 'Peter'; [referring to the apocryphal Gospel of Peter] according to the other, Jesus appeared in Jerusalem before the disciples had left the city; so thought Luke and the author of the fourth gospel. Both these traditions cannot be primitive for they are mutually exclusive. Unless we reject both we must suppose that one is later than the other.¹¹

Reference will be made later to this general problem, but before leaving the above, mention should be made of a misstatement of fact. Contrary to what he says, Matthew does report an appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem before the one in Galilee.¹² The original Mark ends abruptly before the appearances, but the Markian Fragment gives two appearances which are identified in other accounts as being in Jerusalem, and one of these is referred to as Jesus' "first" appearance.¹³

Other proposed differences are largely in matters of detail and may be of more value as an indication of independent testimony rather than real inconsistencies.

¹¹ P. Gardner-Smith, The Narratives of the Resurrection A Critical Study (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1926), p. 119. Italics mine.

¹² Matthew 28:8-10.

¹³ Mark 16:9-11.

Its Non-Defensive Attitude. To be sure the "demythologizing" school of form critics are telling us that the entire gospel accounts are but subtle apologetics created by the early Christians to defend their "faith." (Where they got this "faith" therefore becomes the great unexplained enigma.) However, if such is so we have to acknowledge that these writers were most deft in presenting such subtleties. If the author of the Gospel of John were trying to prove Jesus had a material body or to encourage believers who do not have the privilege of seeing Jesus, he clothed it in the most remarkably real account possible when he told the story of Thomas !

It is acknowledged that the writers of the gospels are Christians, convinced that Jesus is the Son of God. In view of that fact, it is all the more remarkable that we do not find a detailed apologetic directed toward the disbelieving world. The accounts are much more like that of unaffected witnesses telling what happened. There are no digressions to convince the Greeks, for example, that personal immortality is possible and hence Jesus' Resurrection not inconsistent with the nature of things. Even the writer that refers to the current controversy with the Jews about the disappearance of Jesus' body, gives the opponents' argument in some detail, but tells with unusual brevity of the Resurrection appearances.¹⁴

Ramsey, after noting Martin Dibelius' high regard for the Emmaus story and Mark's account of the women at the

¹⁴ Matthew 28.

tomb, comments, "This judgment is not surprising. Both these stories give the impression that they are taking us behind the formal apologetic of the Church and are shewing us the original bewilderment and half-awareness of the disciples and of the women."¹⁵ However, the entire account is marked by the same general attitude. It has caused one to say,

There is literally no parallel to this in the history of the world.

The Gospels tell the story in unapproachable language, all the more unapproachable because everything is so calmly and so quietly related. To the Christians Christ's Resurrection was so simple a matter of fact as any other event in his life and was to be as simply recounted.¹⁶

Summary. In reviewing what has been discussed in this section one outstanding fact comes to light. Of the five or six writers who tell of Jesus' Resurrection, not one felt compelled to prove that Jesus rose from the dead. This is made clear by observing what is included in a typical modern "proof" of the Resurrection. Certain things invariably are included. All of the appearances are given and arranged in order. A systematic study is made of the nature of Jesus' Resurrection body. An attempt is made to clarify any seeming discrepancies, and finally a presentation of alternate views is given along with their refutation. But these are the very things that the gospel writers fail to

¹⁵ A. Michael Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 1946), p. 62.

¹⁶ Burton S. Easton in An Outline of Christianity The Story of Our Civilization (New York: Bethelhem Publishers, Inc., 1926), Vol. I, p. 110.

do! No doubt the disposition this omission reveals--the lack of any sense of necessity to defend the Resurrection--is the most important single psychological factor to be accounted for in the gospel writers. James S. Stewart says of this, "The evidence they offered was neither signed statements of neutral observers nor closely reasoned philosophic argument: . . ." He adds, "It was rather the evidence of lives changed utterly by contact with the risen Christ."¹⁷ They witness in their unaffected manner to having visited the empty tomb and of having met Jesus alive. They offer their lives as the proof, and an effective proof it is.

III. THE WRITERS' PURPOSES AND SELF-LIMITATIONS

In each of our six sources for the Resurrection story there are evidences, either directly stated or implicit, of the operation of certain laws of selection. We will examine each of these in turn.

First Corinthians Fifteen. Thus far relatively little mention has been made of this passage, but in our present study it becomes of great importance. Paul has given us what many believe to be our earliest list of Resurrection appearances. Several questions arise including: does this list include all of the appearances that Paul knew about?

¹⁷ James S. Stewart, A Faith To Proclaim (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 116. Orr tells us that "in no case is it the design of the Evangelists to furnish proofs for the Resurrection" in op. cit., p. 155. In a footnote Orr allows for the possible exception of John.

Or might there be reasonable evidence that he was using a law of selection? Why does he include his own experience when it is not included in the other groups of appearances?

Critics have been quick to assert that Paul here tells us all he knows. Thus Bultmann confidently informs us, "The accounts of the empty grave, of which Paul still knows nothing, are legends."¹⁸ Similar denials have been made about other accounts which Paul failed to mention, such as the Emmaus story.

Now First Corinthians fifteen is Paul's greatest single writing on the resurrection and immortality of the believer. This chapter was included in the letter because "some members of the Corinthian Church denied the resurrection of the dead,"¹⁹ compelling the Apostle to enter on a systematic defense and exposition of this Christian doctrine."²⁰ He uses several arguments to show the nature of the resurrection of believers, its reasonableness, and its necessity. However, the real foundation for the Christian hope in immortality is the fact that Jesus conquered death. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."²¹ He ties the two events--Christ's Resurrection

¹⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Kendrick Grobel, Translator (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 45. Italics mine.

¹⁹ I Corinthians 15:12.

²⁰ G. G. Findlay, The Expositor's Greek Testament, W. Robertson Nicoll, editor (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), Vol. II, p. 917.

²¹ I Corinthians 15:20. Stapfer in discussing this

and Christian immortality--inseparably together.²² More than that he hinges the entire Christian faith on the truth of Jesus' Resurrection. "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."²³

In giving the setting for this crucial argument Paul reminds his readers of the gospel which he preached and which they received. It is the gospel of Jesus' death "for our sins," of His burial and Resurrection "according to the scriptures."²⁴ He then calls to mind six witnesses or groups of witnesses, concluding with Jesus' appearance to the writer, Paul. One of the outstanding features of this whole account is that Paul merely reminds them of their belief in Jesus' Resurrection but does not try to prove it. Though these people were skeptics about immortality generally, they "do not question the personal resurrection of Jesus Christ."²⁵ "The Apostle's refutation starts from the assumption of this cardinal fact."²⁶ When we consider what tremendous issues Paul hung on this assumption, we see how confident he was

chapter completely misses and reverses the meaning. He asserts that Paul is saying that general immortality is the proof that Jesus rose from the dead. Edmond Stapfer, The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, p. 210.

²² Cf. I Corinthians 15:13, 15.

²³ I Corinthians 15:17.

²⁴ Cf. ante, pp. 123 ff. Also Findlay, op. cit., p. 919.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 917. Findlay adds the comment, "A circumstance of great apologetic value."

²⁶ Loc. cit.

that the Christians at Corinth were thoroughly convinced. He seems to infer that they have seen some of the witnesses,²⁷ and again by inference challenges them to consult with the "greater part" of the five hundred who are yet living.²⁸

This observation relative to Paul's assumption concerning his readers is shared by many scholars. In a recent publication Maurice Goguel, who is very critical in his approach, after observing that the earliest text to speak of appearances of the Resurrected Jesus is the one under consideration, adds that it merely "alludes to them the appearances as facts known to the reader. Paul only refers to them as evidence in favor of his argument for the resurrection which had been denied by certain Corinthians."²⁹

Under such circumstances would it be strange if Paul omitted the empty tomb and failed to list every appearance he knew? Lake, in reference to these details, said,

Was there any reason why Saint Paul should have supplied these details, had he known them? Surely not. He was not trying to convince the Corinthians that the Lord was risen: he was reminding them that he had already convinced them on this point by quoting the formula which he had previously proved to their satisfaction to represent the facts. This formula is not quoted by him in order to prove that Christ rose; but in order to serve as an indisputable premise in his argument that the dead will rise.³⁰

²⁷ I Corinthians 15:11.

²⁸ I Corinthians 15:6.

²⁹ Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 41.

³⁰ Lake, op. cit., pp. 193-194.

Since Mr. Bultmann has so recently with dogmatic finality declared that because Paul failed to specifically mention the empty tomb that he knew nothing about it, we pursue this thought just a bit further. When Paul says that Christ died, was buried, and has been raised, if the empty tomb is not assumed what can be the significance of the reference to the burial? What does he mean by raised? Ramsey observes this point and notes "The most radical of critics, Schmiedel, and the most scientific of critics, Lake, agreed that the belief in the empty tomb is implied in these words."³¹

If Paul is not obliged to give all the information he has about the Resurrection appearances, is there any discernible process of selection in the list he does give? There would seem to be. "The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but includes the names most prominent in the church, the witnesses whose testimony would be best known and most accessible."³² Would the situation demand, for example, that he mention the appearance to Mary Magdalene if he knew it? Certainly not. It would be more surprising under the circumstances, if Paul mentioned the women in such a brief form "for it was the testimony of the Apostles that would be held to have special authority. To the Corinthians, mention of the evidence of the women quite unknown to them would carry

³¹ Ramsey, op. cit., p. 44. Italics his.

³² Findlay, op. cit., p. 918.

little weight."³³

It was this "Apostolic" clue that may account for Paul's strong emphasis on his own witness to the Resurrected Jesus. In this same book we have Paul crying out, "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?"³⁴ His strong desire to defend his apostleship is even more forcefully brought out in his second letter to Corinth.³⁵ That he would assert it in this setting is not surprising. "He could not be reticent about that appearance of Jesus which was the basis of his mission and his authority."³⁶ Under the circumstances outlined here it would hardly have enhanced Paul's position as an apostle to have added the name of Mary Magdalene and the other women to his list!

Are we forced to conclude as many have, that since Paul lists his experience (presumably on the Damascus road) with the others that they were identical in nature. As to the reality of Paul's Damascus experience, few are prepared to deny. However, many have insisted that it was a "vision" and hence all of the appearances were identical. That Paul believed Jesus left the tomb is implied by his reference to burial, as mentioned above.³⁷ He later describes the

³³ Ramsey, op. cit., p. 43. It is acknowledged that James was not an "Apostle," but his prominence in the church makes his witness of great value.

³⁴ I Corinthians 9:1. Cf. also 1:1; 4:9; 9:2, 5.

³⁵ Cf. II Corinthians 11:5; 12:11-12 and context.

³⁶ Ramsey, op. cit., p. 42.

³⁷ Cf. Orr, op. cit., p. 39.

Resurrection body as something that can be identified, even though it is changed from mortal to immortal, corruptible to incorruptible.³⁸ Further, Paul infers that his experience was the abnormal rather than the standard for the experience. He compares his revelation to a "child untimely born" or more properly an "abortion."³⁹ We cannot insist that this means more than the abnormality in time, but on the other hand we cannot insist that it means only that, especially since he was "late" rather than an "abortion" so far as time was concerned.

The critical facts for us to observe from the foregoing discussion of First Corinthians, however, is that Paul chose his list of witnesses on another basis than telling all he knew, and that he makes no attempt to "prove" that Jesus rose from the dead. His failure to offer such a proof is a much stronger testimony than if he had, especially when he is willing to base his integrity,⁴⁰ his hope of immortality,⁴¹ and the truth of the Christian church on the Resurrection of Jesus.⁴²

³⁸ I Corinthians 15:53. Lake concedes, "There can be no doubt that he [Paul] believed in the complete personal identity of that which rose with that which had died and been buried." Op. cit., p. 20.

³⁹ Cf. Findlay, op. cit., p. 921.

⁴⁰ I Corinthians 15:15.

⁴¹ I Corinthians 15:18, 19.

⁴² I Corinthians 15:14.

The Gospel According to Matthew. Matthew's report of the Resurrection is brief. The visit of the women to the tomb is given along with a very terse account of two appearances. As has been previously mentioned, Matthew gives almost an equal amount of space to the activities of the opponents, the "chief priests,"⁴³ as he does to the activities of Jesus. While he discredits the current report that the disciples stole the body, he gives no description of Jesus coming from the tomb or the corporeality of the Risen Christ which would have offered such a tempting apologetic.⁴⁴

Our basic concern, however, is to try to observe any law of selection in use by Matthew. Does he tell us all he knew about Jesus' Resurrection? A centrality of purpose is immediately detected by observing the climax of the angelic announcements along with the two appearances. In the first we have the angel instructing the women to "Go quickly, and tell his disciples." The message is two-fold. Jesus has risen and wishes to make an appointment to meet in Galilee.⁴⁵

⁴³ It is interesting to note how closely Matthew follows the "chief priests" during the Crucifixion and Resurrection sections. He refers to their activities by that term twelve times.

⁴⁴ The second century Apocryphal Gospel of Saint Peter embellishes the Matthew account with just such additions. The "elders" also were at the tomb and saw two men come from heaven and enter the tomb. Three men emerged, "The two supporting the one, and a cross following them. And of the two the head reached unto the heaven, but the head of Him that was led by them overpassed the heavens." The contrast is striking. A translation of the fragment is given in Henry Latham, The Risen Master (Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co., 1910), p. 27.

⁴⁵ Matthew 28:7.

As the women depart, they meet Jesus. The only words of Jesus that are preserved are found to contain similar information. "Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there they shall see me."⁴⁶

The next and final scene is in Galilee on the mountain "where Jesus had appointed them." With brief introduction we come to the great commission: "Go . . . make disciples . . . baptize . . . teach." Here is a law of centrality in operation which cannot be denied. The great commission with its universal (all) authority, its universal outreach (all the nations), its universal obedience (observe all things) and its universal time (always) is not only a climax to the chapter but a fitting climax to the gospel which begins with, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" and traces the Kingdom to this conclusion. Jesus, the King Immanuel (God with us), concludes His commission with, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Out of the Jerusalem experiences Matthew chose only those that pointed like arrows to this Galilean appointment.⁴⁷ For his purposes there seemed to be little interest in those appearances whose discernible objectives were identification, instruction, and faith. As we will observe later, John and Luke were extremely interested in these appearances also.

If, as the evidence seems to indicate, Matthew was

⁴⁶ Matthew 28:10.

⁴⁷ Matthew's centrality has been observed by many, including Easton, op. cit., p. 118, and Ramsey, op. cit., p. 65.

very selective in his approach, we have no right to accuse him for leaving outside his selection much material that we in the twentieth century might consider necessary for positive proof of the Resurrection. If he did not feel it compulsory to include such material, may it not be important testimony, as in the case of Paul, that he felt no great urgency for such a proof?

Mark Sixteen, Verses One to Eight. Until the textual problems regarding these verses are settled they can be of little value to us in our present study. The Greek ends most abruptly indicating the ending has been lost. "The general trend of modern commentators has been to deny that these words can possibly be the deliberate ending to a sentence, a story, or a Gospel."⁴⁸ If this is true, the least we can assert that the original Mark does not tell us all he knows about Jesus' Resurrection. With that we let it rest.

Mark Sixteen, Verses Nine to Twenty. In this fragment we are more limited, due to its brevity and its uncertain literary connection with the rest of Mark. Even in this short document, however, we can see what may be some evidence of a selective principle. The disciples, their actions and reactions, are prominent. Especially do we observe the pointing out of their incredulity. Jesus'

⁴⁸ Ramsey, op. cit., p. 64.

instructions to them includes much about the confirming signs which will follow belief. Again all we can say of this document is that it cannot be forced to be a summary of all the writer knew about the Resurrection.

The Gospel According to Luke, With Acts One, Verses One to Twelve. We move into a much more explicit and exciting field of study. Both the Gospel and Acts give us a "preface" which helps determine the author's method and intention.⁴⁹ Luke's introduction gives us several important facts. Other gospels, or at least writings relative to Jesus were in circulation at the time he wrote. He is in contact with people "who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." This indication that the writer was in contact with the apostles is further vindicated in the book of Acts. The "we" sections identify him as the companion of the apostle Paul. At the end of the third missionary journey is found the following significant passage.

And after these days we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. . . . And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.⁵⁰

He professes to have made a careful and thorough investigation, "having traced the course of all things accurately from the first." He proposes to write "in order," indicating perhaps chronologically, or at least

⁴⁹ Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-5.

⁵⁰ Acts 21:15, 17-18.

systematically. He is writing that Theophilus, the recipient, might "know the certainty concerning the things" in which he had been instructed, or as in an alternate reading the things he had been "taught by word of mouth."⁵¹ Theophilus was perhaps a Christian. At least he was informed about the Christian faith and presumably favorable to it.

In Acts, which is likewise addressed to Theophilus, he summarizes his former treatise as "concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up." In the Greek, the clause, "after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen," is inserted between "day in which" and "he was received up." The arrangement is important because it infers that important "commandments" immediately preceded the Ascension, in which case they would be made by the Resurrected Jesus. He now summarizes the period between Jesus' passion and Ascension. There are four important things mentioned. Jesus showed Himself alive. Over a period of forty days He appeared to them, offering many proofs that He was risen from the dead. During this time He instructed them, "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." He charged or commanded them to "wait for the promise of the Father," The final significant act was to make a promise, saying, "Ye shall be baptized in [or with] the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

⁵¹ Marginal reading for Luke 1:4 in A.S.V.

We are now prepared to ask ourselves some important questions. Does Luke seem to be telling all he knows about the Resurrection and the Resurrection appearances or is he following some rather definite law of selection? Is his method that of polemic and proof, or does there seem to be other motives? Nearly one-half of his presentation in the Gospel is the "beautiful and arresting"⁵² story of the two enroute to Emmaus, given with many touches of detail. Preceding this story is an inclusive summary account of the discovery of the empty tomb, the report of the women, and the reaction of the disciples.⁵³ Following the Emmaus account and actually a continuation of it, is the Sunday evening appearance to the twelve. The narrative concludes with a brief summary of instruction, promise and commandment, a note on the Ascension and a glimpse of the worshipping and praising disciples.

The empty tomb and Emmaus stories--the latter with its concluding appearance to the disciples--take place on the day of the Resurrection. No other time reference is given and if one assumed the Ascension took place at night, all of the events reported in Luke could have taken place on Easter day. Can we assume that the three appearances here listed, with an allusion to a fourth, is all that Luke meant by "he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days."? The answer

⁵² Cf. Ramsey, op. cit., p. 66.

⁵³ Cf. ante, p. 97 footnote.

is obvious. Luke gives us only a fragment of the total Resurrection happenings. We have reports on two days out of forty, Easter and the day of the Ascension. Of the appearances reported much is obviously condensed. "Of all the things which He spake concerning the Kingdom of God, how few sentences, so far as we know, have been committed to writing."⁵⁴ We know that He "opened their mind that they might understand the scripture" explaining the things "written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms" concerning Himself.⁵⁵ Yet of this light on the Old Testament "how few rays have been preserved for the illumination and kindling of our hearts."⁵⁶ To assume that Luke tells us all the facts or even all he knew of the facts is a distortion and misrepresentation. Still this is a basic assumption of much critical study of the Resurrection passages.

Since Luke is obviously being selective, is there any discernible line of thought which distinguishes his report? Just as Matthew is so overpowered by Jesus' regal commission to evangelize the world that he selects only that which will point toward it, so Luke seems equally impressed with those intimate instructions, directive commands, and promises of grace which Jesus gave during the forty days. We have

⁵⁴ Brooke Foss Westcott, The Revelation of the Risen Lord (London: Macmillan and Co., 1887), p. 5, referring to Acts 1:3. Italics his.

⁵⁵ Luke 24:44-45.

⁵⁶ Westcott, op. cit., p. 5.

already referred to these in part. In addition to what we have commented upon, we note that even of the angels' instruction, Luke preserves for us the call to remembrance that Jesus had predicted His death and Resurrection.⁵⁷ As they walked toward Emmaus, He "interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."⁵⁸ One of His very last bits of instruction was to clear up a lingering misconception concerning the kingdom.⁵⁹ The very thing which seemingly was secondary to Matthew was of absorbing interest to Luke. Hence Matthew tells only of one Jerusalem appearance since it contributes to his purpose. Luke apparently sees no necessity to referring to the Galilean appearances in telling his story.

Since Luke's failure to mention Galilee has contributed to the current "two tradition" hypothesis, this further should be noted. Just as Matthew concentrates on Jesus' Galilean ministry, and even Jesus' Galilean "mountain" experiences,⁶⁰ Luke's gospel is always conscious of Jerusalem. He devotes many chapters of his gospel to Jesus' journey to Jerusalem,⁶¹ including much material omitted from the other

⁵⁷ Luke 24:7.

⁵⁸ Luke 24:27.

⁵⁹ Acts 1:6-7.

⁶⁰ Cf. The sermon on the mountain, Matthew 5:1, and 8:1; praying on the mountain, 14:23; the four thousand on the mountain, 15:29; the transfiguration, 17:1; and finally the Great Commission from the mountain in Galilee, 28:16.

⁶¹ Cf. Luke 9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28.

records. In Jerusalem He died. He revealed "the continuity of the divine purpose through the events in Jerusalem, the mission of the church from Jerusalem."⁶² In Acts we see the advance of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. "This is Luke's theme; he is absorbed in it; he telescopes his story in accordance with it; he omits what would be a diversion from it."⁶³ Luke's omission of the Galilean story is not hard to understand. Further, there is nothing in his narrative to even infer the exclusion of the possibility of such an appearance.

We must ask again if Luke is trying to prove the Resurrection to a disbelieving critical world. The answer is negative. He is not trying to amass all the evidence he knew of the Resurrection. He is selecting important facts of Jesus' life for Theophilus to give him additional assurance. He may well have omitted or merely summarized much material with which he knew his friend to be thoroughly familiar. If the Emmaus incident were less well known than some of the appearances to the major disciples, and especially if Luke had the privilege of hearing the story direct from Cleopas or his companion as the intimate details would seem to indicate, its prominence is readily understood. We cannot insist on the above, but we can insist that the very manner in which the story is told, with its incidental

⁶² Ramsey, op. cit., p. 67.

⁶³ Loc. cit.

allusion to the important appearance to Simon, is decidedly not that of "the narrator of evidence who is striving to prove his case."⁶⁴

The Gospel According to John. As in the case of Luke, John has not left us without guidance as to his objectives and method of procedure. At the conclusion of Chapter twenty, in the midst of his account of the Resurrection, or rather as the present writer prefers to think, before his appendix necessitated by a current misinterpretation, we have these words,

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.⁶⁵

Paul F. Barackman has made five observations about this statement(of which the following is a condensation).⁶⁶
 (1) The method employed is that of citing testimony. (2) Both the foregoing and the standpoint of the author, the position of being an eyewitness, is indicated by the phrase, "in the presence of the disciples." As has been previously pointed out the writer of this gospel in other places intimated that he is a disciple and eyewitness.⁶⁷ (3) There is

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶⁵ John 20:30-31.

⁶⁶ Paul F. Barackman, "The Gospel According to John," Interpretation A Journal of Bible and Theology, VI (January, 1952), pp. 63-76.

⁶⁷ Of. ante, p. 17.

in this record selection of material from a wide field. There were "many other signs" which were "not written in this book."

(4) His objective is to induce belief. (5) He invites us to a "careful investigation of the central figure of this history." The object of faith is "Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God."

We raise our usual questions. Is John telling us all he knows about Jesus' Resurrection? Obviously not! Even though we concede that in referring to the many other "signs" that are not written he doubtless includes the entire book we cannot assume he has given us all of his information about the forty days. This is supported by a similar statement at the end of Chapter twenty-one, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."⁶⁸ Here he is using the force of hyperbole to show how relatively little he has written of the total information.

Is there evidence of selection? In keeping with his stated objective, we find in Chapter twenty the pictures of three individuals and one group as they come into belief that Jesus is risen. We have pointed out previously how this instant of belief is the psychological climax of at least three of these. Little of Jesus' words of instruction or commandment is given. The idea of the world commission

⁶⁸ Matthew 21:25.

is hinted and the Ascension inferred.⁶⁹ John's chief concern is that we see how these witnesses came to believe.

Is John trying to prove the Resurrection of Jesus? To a degree, and by his own admission, yes. In the sense that we have been considering, that is, of feeling the obligation to amass all the possible materials available, answer the questions and refute the arguments of the then disbelieving world, he is not trying to prove the Resurrection. He uses the appealingly beautiful method of letting us see others believe and be inspired to follow their example and testimony rather than the method of polemic and debate. Perhaps as some have suggested, this book is "the autobiography of a faith." John chose some of the high lights of Jesus' life that led him to the life-giving truth of His Divine Sonship and passed them on that others might believe. He gives us the high points from "that never-to-be-forgotten tenth hour when, as we feel, he went to the house where Jesus was staying," through many wonderful experiences and on "to the time when he could join Thomas in the confession of that same Jesus as his Lord and his God."⁷⁰

The purposes of Jesus' forty days of appearances with the disciples included at least the three things upon which the three Evangelists focus their attention. He wished them to know that He was risen, inspiring their faith in His

⁶⁹ John 20:22 and 17 respectively. Also the reinstatement of Peter in John 21 is something of a personal commission.

⁷⁰ Barackman, op. cit., p. 68.

Sonship and Mission. John centers on the incidents which illustrate this. Christ instructed and inspired the disciples. Luke was absorbed with this aspect of His ministry. Matthew sublimated all else to the Galilean appointment with its challenge to evangelize the world. No writer completely omits the entire emphasis but presents his selection in keeping with his interest and objective.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Consideration of the Objections to the Resurrection Accounts in the Light of This Investigation. The gospel accounts are accused of being fragmentary and of leaving many questions unanswered. In actual fact none of our gospels are more than strict condensations and summary reports of Jesus' life. The Resurrection accounts are not necessarily short in relation to the other information we have about Jesus. Next to Good Friday, we doubtless have more information about Easter than any other day of Jesus' life. Only when one assumes that we here have all of the facts that each of the respective writers were able to give us do we get into such irrational arguments from silence as is illustrated by Bultmann in the previous pages⁷¹ and by many others.⁷² On the contrary we have in some cases a precise

⁷¹ Cf. ante, pp. 142, 145.

⁷² Compare for example, Gougel who with striking absence of historical imagination and even understanding of the express statement of a supporting scripture says of Peter and "the other disciple" after they investigated the

statement from the author that he is limiting his account, and in every case strong internal evidence that the writer was using a selective approach in gathering and presenting his material. As much as we would like a complete record, we have to face the fact that they did not feel compelled to give it! As we will note later this fact in itself is of primary importance.

It is further doubtful as to whether we are fair in demanding "all the facts." Time Magazine, in its twenty-fifth anniversary issue, set forth its principles of news gathering. It says it is impossible to get "all the facts" and if they did in so simple an event as an automobile accident it would "fill a library" and the various reports of engineer, traffic expert, oculist, etc., "would contradict each other." They conclude by saying,

The shortest or the longest news story is the result of selection. The selection is not, and cannot be, "scientific" or "objective." It is made by human beings who bring to the job their own personal experience and education, their own values. They make statements about facts. Those statements, invariably, involve ideas.⁷³

Can we demand any more of our New Testament writers?

tomb, "After they had made these inquiries they return and ask no further questions about them before the appearance of Christ, on the evening of the same day, to them and to others." Op. cit., p. 54. Since it does not say otherwise, are we to assume they slept all day? At least Peter stirred around enough to apparently separate himself from the other disciple and meet the Resurrected Jesus! (Luke 24:34)

⁷³ Anon., "The Story of an Experiment," Time Magazine, LI (March 8, 1948), pp. 65-66.

The accounts are accused of being contradictory. The issue is not as to whether there are difficulties or not, but rather whether they might possibly be reconciled or are irreconcilable. If we have ten pieces or even fifty of a one-hundred-piece jig-saw puzzle it is much more difficult to discern the picture and "reconcile the contradictions" than if we have ninety-eight of the pieces. The evidence in the New Testament is certainly that we have no more than half of the pieces.

In direct contrast to the testimony in the gospels some have taken the position that the real body of evidence is considerably less. They picture an original impression or incident as some gnarled root of evidence out of which has grown a few distorted limbs, rather than recognizing that there was a veritable forest of material out of which the writers have chosen a few specimens which especially interested them. Under such circumstances the question of Gardner-Smith and others, drawn on a false premise that the "Jerusalem Tradition" grew out of and is a distortion of the "Galilee Tradition" or vice versa, is beside the point. It becomes rather Galilee and Jerusalem, as is indicated by Matthew, John,⁷⁴ and the combined "Mark" accounts

⁷⁴ Note how naturally John in Chapter 21 adds this appearance in Galilee to clarify the current misunderstanding, when if he had omitted this story how confidently critics would have spoken of "the Galilean tradition, of which John knew nothing!" On the complementary nature of the two sets of appearances see Ramsey, op. cit., pp. 69-72.

supplementing and abetting one another.

The Striking Absence of Apologetic to Unbelievers.

Our study of the separate narratives of the Resurrection confirmed what we observed in the supposed weaknesses of the cumulative record. These men jointly and separately failed to offer a systematic proof of the Resurrection. It reveals an attitude which saw no need for making such a defense. George A. Turner has pointed out that the scene in Acts one, twenty-one to twenty-six, is marked by this same attitude. Surrounded by hostile Jews in the city where Jesus was killed only a few weeks before, they evidence neither fear nor uncertainty. "There were no secret misgivings about the truth of this witness, no intention to deceive the public with false reports, no need to 'whistle in the dark' to keep up courage for a cause of which they were uncertain, no need for rationalization."⁷⁵

Part of the attitude of the gospel writers is no doubt due to the fact that their writings were intended for people who were already believers. Goguel says that the earliest New Testament writers wrote only for church members "and therefore did not express all their knowledge, sentiments, and beliefs, because they could assume that their readers already shared them."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ George A. Turner, "The Resurrection The Central Emphasis of Apostolic Preaching," The Christian Minister, VI (June, 1954), p. 2. Italics mine.

⁷⁶ Goguel, op. cit., p. 5.

Had it not been for a group of people in Corinth who publicized their disbelief in personal immortality and another group who were misinterpreting Jesus' words relative to "the beloved disciple," we would be deprived of two of our very important witnesses to the Resurrection. We would be deprived of the knowledge of at least two appearances and many supporting cross references. We would not have known that there were over five hundred present at one appearance. Consideration of how incidental these references are emphasizes anew that each of the writers was not trying to give a complete story of the Resurrection as well as illustrating his lack of a sense of need of presenting literary proof in his generation.

The More Emphatic Testimony. We must not forget that the accounts we have been studying are only a part of the evidence of the Resurrection. It is true they tell of the origin of the Resurrection faith, but the tremendous power and centrality of that faith is testified to directly in every New Testament document and is intimately related to every New Testament doctrine. The Resurrection of Jesus was the chief witness of the New Testament Church and the climax of the apostolic preaching. They prayed to the "Lord Jesus,"⁷⁷ sang of His triumph over death,⁷⁸ called

⁷⁷ Acts 7:59 for example.

⁷⁸ Ephesians 5:14.

the death of their beloved master the "Good News," because of their triumphant certainty. They took the contemporary equivalent of a "hangman's scaffold," an "electric chair" and used it to mark their places of worship, erected it above their graves. The Roman power which used this brutal "cross" as its means of execution had the same instrument waved in its face as a symbol of victory and triumph.

When we catch even a part of the spirit of their triumphant witness we begin to discern a greater reason perhaps as to why the Evangelists saw no need to prove the Resurrection in the manner the twentieth century demands. How unnecessary it must have seemed in the midst of literally hundreds of living witnesses who had seen Jesus alive, witnesses who "went everywhere preaching the word." Paul could rely on that testimony, inferring to the Corinthians to check with the over two hundred living witnesses, many of whom they may have already seen. Hence instead of proving that Jesus rose, he merely recalled it to their minds and rested his mighty logical structure upon it. Our very lack of information (which is not too inadequate at that) may be but a reflection of a greater testimony which is abundantly revealed in the spirit and witness of the New Testament Church!!

Certainly a partial explanation for the briefness of the Resurrection narrative is the fact that it was the most witnessed to, the best attested truth in the gospel story, and additional writing was considered unnecessary!

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I. THE FACING OF PRESUPPOSITIONS

Our effort to re-examine the Resurrection stories has brought us into contact with much of the thought that has been given to this crucial doctrine and foundational fact of the Christian faith. Not a little of the work of the past century has been critical of the Resurrection, and in many cases where not attacking it directly, the end result of the study has been to undermine the doctrines connected with the Resurrection of Jesus or give the entire body of truth a meaning different from what it had in the minds of the original writers. It will make our summary and conclusions stand out in bolder relief, if we review some of the presuppositions we have found continually asserting themselves in the studies referred to above.

The Presupposition of Naturalism. "Every historian," says Strauss in referring to the Resurrection, "should possess philosophy enough to deny miracles here as well as elsewhere."¹ The Resurrection of Jesus purports to be

¹ Quoted in F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884), Vol. III, p. 323.

God's direct intrusion into human history and hence a miracle so far as our human vantage point is concerned. Strauss and the many who have begun with the same presupposition have no alternative but to deny the New Testament assertion and explain the entire phenomena on "naturalistic" grounds. The simple fact is that if it were what it purports to be, men with such presuppositions could never discover it to be so. Before they begin their investigation they have decided on their answer. The present writer cannot equate such a spirit with a "scientific attitude." The least we can ask is an open mind to the possibility that Jesus rose from the dead until the witnesses have had an opportunity to speak on their own terms. This opportunity we have tried to afford.

The Creation of False Dilemmas Rising out of Presuppositions. A typical example of the above is that which has been cited relative to Kirsopp Lake's treatment of the Resurrection body. It must be either "spiritual" in the sense of having no objectivity, or "material" and an exact duplication of the body put in the grave. The New Testament tells of a complete transformation. Jesus was the same person, the same personality, the same identity, but rose with "wonderful additions" and the freedom from present limitations. Lake sees this alternative but rejects it on the basis of his presuppositions and quotes with approval Dr. Rashdall to the effect that, "Were the testimony fifty times stronger than it is, any hypothesis would be more

possible than that."² If we exclude God as the Creator of the Universe, including the minds that are wrestling with these problems, our presuppositions will automatically exclude the possibility of His performing something unique in the world.

Fallacious Concepts Regarding the New Testament Writers. We have observed a few of many evidences of false presuppositions in the critical attitude toward the New Testament writers. For example the assumption that each writer was telling all he knew about the Resurrection and hence false arguments from silence. Related to this has been the assumptions that the writers were trying to prove the Resurrection in their day in a manner in accordance with a twentieth century approach. Again growing out of the assumptions above and a vital part of much recent criticism is that from some little seed idea the story of the Resurrection grew rather than the testimony of the records that they are reporting some of many things that happened. Coupled with the above is the unconscious application of what Reinhold Niebuhr has called the "underlying presupposition of what may be broadly defined as 'liberal' culture," namely, the idea of progress. This creed, says Dr. Niebuhr, is "highly dubious" even though the average liberal does not bother to defend it because he is so confident in it.³

² Kirsopp Lake, The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), p. 257.

³ Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), Vol. II, p. 240.

A summary application of the above can be made by restating the position of a writer not hitherto referred to but who typifies many we have quoted. He tells us that the Resurrection stories gradually arose expressing "the conviction--the absolute certainty--of the earliest members of the community that Jesus was present with them."⁴ These people became missionaries, growing increasingly confident "that they had a religious message of supreme importance." Continuing on the false premise mentioned above he adds,

Probably almost from the beginning, before the stories of the empty tomb and the post-resurrection appearances took shape as Christian beliefs, the earliest disciples of Jesus expressed their spiritual certainty by words such as 'Christ is risen. . . .' Metaphor changes easily into myth, and myth into what is supposed to be history.⁵

Our study of the psychological evidences have of necessity brought us into direct contact with the above. Its relevance will be noted along with the summary of findings which follows.

⁴ Ernest William Barnes, The Rise of Christianity (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1947), p. 174. Note the reversal of cause and effect as discussed in ante pp. 66 ff.

⁵ Ibid., p. 175. Dr. Barnes on the basis of his analysis calls the survival of Christianity "the supreme miracle of history." Of this comment J. N. Sanders says, "On his explanation, it is frankly incredible." J. N. Sanders, The Foundations of the Christian Faith (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), p. 111. For a good discussion on "presuppositions" see Ibid., pp. 7-10. A. Michael Ramsey, in The Resurrection of Christ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 53-56, also gives a vital evaluation of the problem.

II. SUMMARY OF PRESENT FINDINGS

The First Generation Christians Believed Jesus Rose From the Dead. This research began with the investigation of the above statement. It was found to be true on the basis of direct investigation and by referring to the students of history. Here is an historically established fact which constitutes the foundation of the study that follows. The certain conviction that Jesus miraculously and triumphantly conquered death is so bound into the New Testament that it cannot be removed without destroying these historically established documents and turning the origin of the entire Christian Church into an unsolved enigma. The words of James S. Stewart well summarize this conviction regarding the centrality of the Resurrection.

This was indeed the very core of the apostolic kerygma. . . . It was the theme of every Christian sermon; it was the master-motive of every act of Christian evangelism; and not one line of the New Testament was written--this is a point which cannot be too strongly emphasized, especially in view of modern attempts to bring the New Testament within the orbit of a humanistic social idealism--not one sentence, whether of Gospels, Epistles, Acts or Apocalypse, was penned apart from the conviction that He of whom these things were being written had conquered death and was alive for ever.⁶

Quoting another, Stewart says, "It is the first and last and dominating element in the Christian consciousness of the New Testament."⁷ The present investigation has con-

⁶ James S. Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 104-105.

⁷ Ibid., p. 105.

firmed these evaluations to be true.

The New Testament Explanation Alone Adequately Explains the Origin of this Belief. We have carefully examined various explanations that have been advanced to explain on naturalistic grounds the empty tomb which was acknowledged by friend and foe, as well as the reported appearances of Jesus after He arose from the dead. Using objective criteria for our evaluation, each in turn was shown to be hopelessly inadequate. The modern efforts at evasion as well as the current fallacy of substituting cause and effect were pointed out. A typical example of the latter is that of Barnes, referred to in this chapter, who attributes the belief in the Resurrection as arising from the conviction on the part of the early Christians that "Jesus was present with them."⁸ The exact opposite is true. They knew Jesus rose from the grave. They saw Him, talked with Him, questioned Him, heard His promise to be with them "always, even unto the consummation of the age."⁹ The result was that they were conscious of His presence. No few writers have been guilty of a complete circle of logic, ending up by explaining the faith in the Resurrection by itself.

The explanation given in the New Testament, that Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God, showing "himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing

⁸ Supra, p.169.

⁹ Matthew 28:20.

unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God,"¹⁰ meets every condition so far as providing an adequate explanation for the belief is concerned. When we realize that the other explanations utterly fail, we must give some consideration to this one despite its supernatural assertions. Even if such a Divine invasion were deemed unlikely for most instances, we are faced with this Man, whose life, works, words, birth, and even death all coincide to add supporting evidence to the Resurrection. The Resurrection is not impossible or improbable if we concede that God Incarnate could enter life in a unique way in order to reveal Himself. Being God Incarnate the fact that He "should live a life of perfect holiness, marked by works of miraculous power and teaching of pre-eminent wisdom," as well as have power over death, "is not improbable but just what we would expect."¹¹ Therefore to accept the testimony of the New Testament is not credulity but is the acceptance of an adequate cause for an undeniable fact.

The Experience Reported by the Resurrection Witnesses has All the Marks of Reality. We next investigated the original accounts and observed the nature of the experience reported by the witnesses. We measured it by the objective standards of religious experience and found it to be exactly

¹⁰ Acts 1:3.

¹¹ F. F. Bruce, The Dawn of Christianity (London: The Paternoster Press, 1950), pp. 75-76.

what a real experience would be. From despair and fear, through incredulity and doubt, to amazement, awe, worship, joy, confidence, and praise, the picture described in the New Testament, both individually and collectively, is sane, natural, and realistic. These reactions are in perfect harmony with the causes which are reported to have brought them about. There is evidence of a specific world-shaking experience out of which grew the conviction that Jesus was alive, His second coming, the hope of immortality of the believer, to mention but a few important Christian doctrines.

The Reports Themselves Have the Marks of Fact as Contrasted to Fiction. In this same section we examined the manner in which the witness to the Resurrection was reported. Again we were struck by its reality; in many cases there was direct evidence of an eyewitness account. These stories do not have the marks of myths growing out of some nebulous abstract idea, but rather the simple testimony of earnest people trying to describe that which defies description. Gilbert West, who began an investigation of the Resurrection in the eighteenth century with the express purpose of discrediting Christianity and ended by writing a valiant defense,¹² offers the following significant comment,

Before I quit this subject, I cannot forbear taking notice of one other mark of integrity, which appears in all the compositions of the sacred writers, and

¹² See Wilbert W. White, The Resurrection Body "According to the Scriptures" (Albany, N.Y.: Frank H. Ivory & Co., 1923), p. vii.

particularly the evangelists, and that is the simple, unaffected, unornamental, and unostentatious manner, in which they deliver truths, so important and sublime; and facts so magnificent and wonderful as are capable, one would think of lighting up a flame of oratory, even in the dullest and coldest breasts.¹³

We have repeatedly discovered indications of sincerity and truth in the way these writers presented their story.

The New Testament Writers All Testify to A More Adequate Witness. Contrary to the false presupposition under which some approaches to the New Testament account have consciously or unconsciously labored, no report of the Resurrection represents all that the writer knew about the facts in connection with it. This is illustrated by direct statement of such by some and is found by seeking for the law of selection which governed the writers in others. Without exception such laws are in evidence.

Closely associated with the above is the evident lack of an effort to prove that Jesus rose from the dead on the part of the Evangelists and Paul in First Corinthians fifteen. This attitude on the part of these writers is nothing short of amazing in the light of the hostility of the Greek mind toward personal immortality in general and the attitude of the Jews who considered the Cross as a sure proof that Jesus was an imposter. Still, rather than trying to prove the Resurrection they merely call a number of witnesses

¹³ Gilbert West, Observation on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Boston: James Loring, 1834), p. 208. First printed in 1747.

before us. There is little doubt that the attitude taken by the New Testament writers in feeling no urgent desire to give a written proof lay in their knowledge of the strikingly effective personal witness which was being made by those who saw Jesus alive. One hundred years later the situation had changed since the original witnesses were gone. In that period we find efforts at embellishment and justification, many of which are gross and visibly distorted. The underlying attitude maintained by the New Testament writers is at once a witness to their early date and simple honesty and at the same time an indirect testimony to the efficient way in which the ones who saw Jesus alive were building a foundation of belief wherever they went.

This study has not tried to discuss all aspects of the Resurrection of Jesus. It has presented a proposed answer to the questions of why these men believed as they did, reacted as they did, and wrote as they did. In each case we found strong support for the historic interpretation of the Resurrection. The really hard answers lie with those who deny Jesus arose. Perhaps these submerged facts, these psychological subtleties, these hidden signs of reality and life are the factors which account for the continued force of the Resurrection fact to grip men's minds and convince them, even in this twentieth century. Men who sense that these things are true and that God has spoken in His Son Jesus Christ, by an act of repentance and faith turn to Him. In this event the Divine confirmation, the

regenerated life, proves itself to be the seal of his original faith. The challenge of Saint Paul given under Divine inspiration still holds good: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."¹⁴ Countless men and women who have met the condition can verify the truth of the promise.

¹⁴ Romans 10:9.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Albright, William Foxwell, The Archaeology of Palestine. London: Penguin Books, 1949. 271 pp.

Barnes, Ernest William, The Rise of Christianity. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1947. 356 pp.

Barth, Karl, The Epistle to the Romans. Edwyn C. Hoskins, translator, London: Oxford University Press, 1933. 547 pp.

_____, The Resurrection of the Dead. H. J. Stenning, translator, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933. 213 pp.

Bartlett, James Vernon, The Apostolic Age. Vol. I, 542 pp. John Fulton, editor, Ten Epochs of Church History, 10 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900.

Bruce, Alexander Balman, and Marcus Dods, The Synoptic Gospels and The Gospel According to John. Vol. I, W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5 vol. Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d., 872 pp.

Bruce, F. F., The Dawn of Christianity. London, The Paternoster Press, 1950. 191 pp.

Brunner, Emil, Eternal Hope. Harold Knight, translator, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954. 232 pp.

_____, The Mediator, A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith. Olive Wyon, translator, London: Lutterworth Press, 1934. 624 pp.

Bultmann, Rudolph, Theology of the New Testament. Vol. I, Kendrick Grobel, translator, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. 366 pp.

Cadbury, H. J., The Making of Luke-Acts. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927. 385 pp.

Cadoux, Cecil John, The Historic Mission of Jesus. New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d. 376 pp.

Caine, Hall, Life of Christ. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1938. 1310 pp.

- Cowman, Mrs. Charles E., Streams in the Desert. Los Angeles: The Oriental Missionary Society, 1932. Eleventh edition. 378 pp.
- Craig, Clarence Tucker, The Beginning of Christianity. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953. 366 pp.
- Curtis, Olin Alfred, The Christian Faith Personally Given in a System of Doctrine. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1905. 541 pp.
- Dean, James E., Keys that Unlock the Scriptures. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1953. 214 pp.
- Dibelius, Martin, From Tradition to Gospel. Bertram Lee Woolf, translator, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935. 311 pp.
- Dobson, G. C., The Empty Tomb and the Risen Lord. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 1933. 164 pp.
- DuBose, Horace M., The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nashville, Tenn.: Lamar and Barton, 1924. 33 pp.
- Dupont-Sommer, A., The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes: New Studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., Ltd., 1954. 195 pp.
- Easton, Burton S., The Birth of Christianity. Vol. I, 429 pp. Ernest Findlay Scott, et. al., editors, An Outline of Christianity The Story of our Civilization, 5 vol. New York: Bethlehem Publishers, Inc., 1926.
- Edgar, R. M'Cheyne, The Gospel of A Risen Saviour. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892. 376 pp.
- Enslin, Morton Scott, Christian Beginnings. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938. 533 pp.
- Erskine, John, The Human Life of Jesus. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1945. 248 pp.
- Fairbairn, A. M., Studies in the Life of Christ. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882. 359 pp.
- Findlay, G. G., St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Vol. II, W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5 vol. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.
- Furness, William H., The Story of the Resurrection of Christ Told Once More. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890. 151 pp.

- Gardner-Smith, P., The Narratives of the Resurrection, A Critical Study. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1926. 196 pp.
- Godet, F., Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John, 3 vol. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884.
- Goguel, Maurice, The Birth of Christianity. H. C. Snape, translator, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954. 558 pp.
- Goodspeed, Edgar J., A Life of Jesus. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950. 237 pp.
- Harnack, Adolf, History of Dogma. Neil Buchanan, translator, 2 vol. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1905.
- _____, What is Christianity. Thomas B. Saunders, translator, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906. 322 pp.
- Hase, Carl, Life of Jesus, A Manual for Academic Study. James Freeman Clarke, translator, Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1893. 267 pp.
- Hayes, Sorenus A., The Resurrection Fact. Nashville, Tenn.: Cokesbury Press, 1932. 355 pp.
- Hopwood, P. G. S., The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church, The Period Prior to the Influence of Paul. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937. 387 pp.
- Irenaeus, Against Heresies in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 9 vol. Buffalo, N. Y.: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1887.
- Keim, Theodor, The History of Jesus of Nazara, Freely Investigated in its Connection with the National Life of Israel, and Related in Detail, 6 vol. London: Williams and Norgate, 1883.
- Kenyon, Fredric G., Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1901. 321 pp.
- Kleiser, Glenville, Training for Authorship. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1925. 612 pp.
- Klausner, Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching. Herbert Danby, translator, New York: Macmillan Company, 1925. 434 pp.
- Lake, Kirsopp, The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. London: Williams and Norgate, 1907. 291 pp.

- Latham, Henry, The Risen Master. Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co., 1910. 488 pp.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott, A History of Christianity. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953. 1516 pp.
- _____, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, 8 vol. New York: Harper and Bros., 1937.
- Lewis, C. S., The Case for Christianity. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944. 56 pp.
- _____, Miracles, A Preliminary Study. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947. 220 pp.
- Loisy, Alfred, The Birth of the Christian Religion. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948. 413 pp.
- Lunn, Arnold, The Third Day. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Book Shop, 1945. 177 pp.
- MacLaren, Alexander, The Resurrection. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1896. 127 pp.
- McCasland, Selby Vernon, The Resurrection of Jesus. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1932. 219 pp.
- Malden, R. H., Problems of the New Testament Today. London: Oxford University Press, 1923. 250 pp.
- Milligan, William, The Resurrection of Our Lord. London: Macmillan and Co., 1894. 318 pp.
- Morison, Frank, Who Moved the Stone? London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1930. 192 pp.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold, The Nature and Destiny of Man, 2 vol. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.
- Niles, D. T., Preaching the Gospel of the Resurrection. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953. 93 pp.
- Ordal, Z. J., The Resurrection of Jesus an Historical Fact. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1928. 128 pp.
- Origin, Against Celsus, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 9 vol. Buffalo, N. Y.: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1887.
- Orr, James, The Resurrection of Jesus. New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d. 292 pp.

- Patterson-Smyth, A People's Life of Christ. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920. 505 pp.
- Phillips, J. B., The Gospels translated into Modern English. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953. 243 pp.
- Pliny the Younger, Correspondence with the Emperor Trajan, Vol. IX, The Harvard Classics, Charles W. Eliot, editor, 50 vol. New York: P. F. Collier & Son Company, 1909.
- Purves, George T., Christianity in the Apostolic Age. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901. 343 pp.
- Ramm, Bernard, Protestant Christian Evidences. Chicago: Moody Press, 1953. 252 pp.
- Ramsey, A. Michael, The Resurrection of Christ. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946. 125 pp.
- Ramsey, W. M., The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920. 427 pp.
- Renan, Ernest, The Apostles. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1895. 288 pp.
- _____, The Life of Jesus. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1899. 311 pp.
- Reville, Albert, Jesus of Nazareth, 2 vol. Paris: Fischbacher, 1897.
- Robertson, Archibald, and Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911. 424 pp.
- Sanders, J. N., The Foundations of the Christian Faith, A Study of the Teaching of the New Testament in the Light of Historical Criticism. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950. 199 pp.
- Schaff, Philip, History of the Christian Church, 7 vol. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.
- Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928, English Translation of Second German Edition. 760 pp.
- Schweitzer, Albert, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede. London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1936. Second English Edition. 410 pp.

- Sloan, Harold Paul, He is Risen. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942. 186 pp.
- Smith, Wilbur M., Therefore Stand. Boston: W. A. Wilde and Co., 1945. 614.
- Souter, A., Tertullian Concerning the Resurrection of the Flesh. London: The Macmillan Co., 1922. 205 pp.
- Sparrow-Simpson, W. J., The Resurrection and Modern Thought. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911. 462 pp.
- Stapfer, Edmond, The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Louise Seymour Houghton, translator. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898. 277 pp.
- Stewart, James S., A Faith to Proclaim. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953. 160 pp.
- Strauss, David Friedrich, A New Life of Christ, 2 vol. London: Williams and Norgate, 1865.
- _____, The Life of Jesus. Marian Evans, translator, 2 vol. New York: Calvin Blanchard, 1856.
- Streeter, Burnett H., et. al., Foundations, A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought. London: Macmillan Company, 1913. 538 pp.
- Swete, Henry Barclay, The Appearances of our Lord after the Passion. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1915. 151 pp.
- Tacitus, Annals, in Modern Library, The Complete Works of Tacitus. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, translators, New York: The Random House, 1942. 773 pp.
- Tenney, Merrill C., Resurrection Realities "Now is Christ Risen." Los Angeles: Bible House of Los Angeles, 1945. 96 pp.
- Townesbee, Arnold J., A Study of History, 10 vol. London: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Trueblood, David Elton, The Logic of Belief, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. 323 pp.
- Walbank, Walter T., and Alastair M. Taylor, Civilization Past and Present, 2 vol. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1942.

Weiss, Bernhard, The Life of Christ, M. G. Hope, translator,
3 vol. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884.

West, Gilbert, Observation on the History and Evidences of
the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Boston: James Loring,
1834. 256 pp. (First Edition 1747)

Westcott, Brooke Foss, The Gospel According to St. John,
2 vol. London: John Murray, 1909.

_____, The Gospel of the Resurrection: Thoughts on its
Relation to Reason and History. London: Macmillan and
Co., 1866. 216 pp.

_____, The Revelation of the Risen Lord. London:
Macmillan and Co., 1887. 199 pp.

White, Wilbert W., The Resurrection Body "According to the
Scriptures." Albany, N. Y.: Frank H. Every and Co.,
1923. 90 pp.

B. PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Anon., "The Story of an Experiment," Time, 51:65-66, March
8, 1948.

Barackman, Paul F., "The Gospel According to John," Interpre-
tation A Journal of Bible and Theology, 6:63-76, January,
1952.

Davies, Paul E., "Resurrection and Spirit," The Journal of
Bible and Religion, 10:187-194, November, 1942.

De Guglielmo, Antonine, "Emmaus," The Catholic Biblical
Quarterly, 3:294-301, October, 1941.

Lilly, Joseph L., "Alleged Discrepancies in the Gospel
Accounts of the Resurrection," The Catholic Biblical
Quarterly, 2:98:11, April, 1940.

_____, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ," The Catholic
Biblical Quarterly, 4:22-36, January, 1942.

Mangan, Edward A., "The Women at the Tomb," The Catholic
Biblical Quarterly, 7:191-200, April, 1945.

McClellan, William H., "Saint John's Evidence of the
Resurrection," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 1:253-
255, July, 1939.

Murphy, Richard T., "The Gospel for Easter Monday," The
Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 6:132-141, April, 1944.

Rose, Delbert R., "The Last Error," The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, March, 1947, p. 8.

Turner, George A., "The Resurrection: The Central Emphasis of Apostolic Preaching," The Christian Minister, 6:1-3, June, 1954.

C. ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES

Jacob, Ernst, "Christianity," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, III, 177-186.

Schmiedel, P. W., "Resurrection-and Ascension-Narratives," Encyclopaedia Biblica, IV, 4039-4087.